

CRUSADERS' GOLD



Anne D. Kyle

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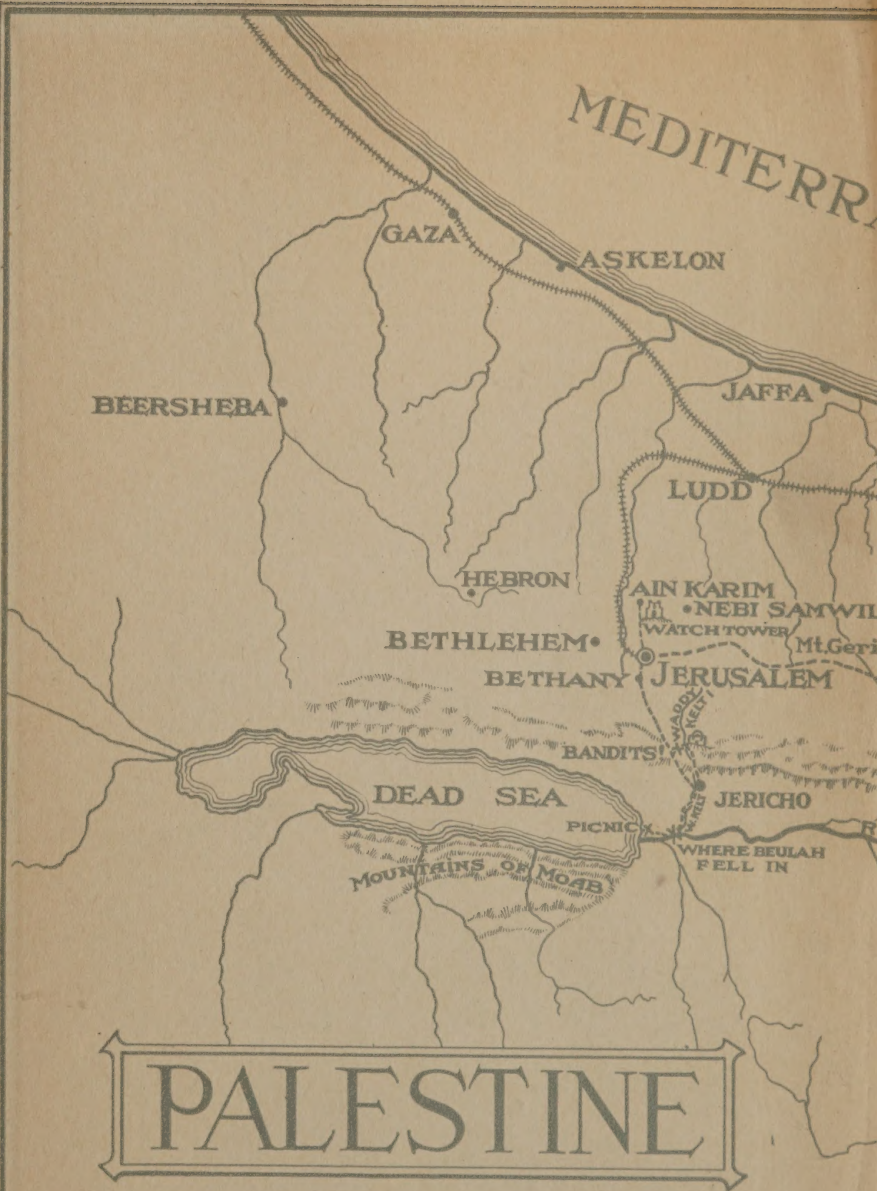
By Anne D. Kyle

THIS is the story of Daphne Pollack, an American girl, in Palestine. Daphne's father is an archæologist, and she goes along with him to keep him company while he carries on researches in Jerusalem. There is a mystery in connection with the ancient code and the treasure that it describes. There are adventures in the Crusaders' Stables and in the Quarries of Solomon, and a picnic in the ruins of the Crusaders' castle near Tiberias. It is from this picnic that the chain of circumstances starts which leads Daphne in the end to find the Golden Box.

Miss Kyle has lived in Palestine, and some of the adventures of the book are her own. The plot is skillfully managed and the background of Jerusalem and the Palestine hills is drawn with accurate and delightful touch. The result is a very unusual book for young people of ten to fifteen.

*GRUSADERS'
GOLD*

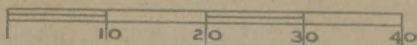
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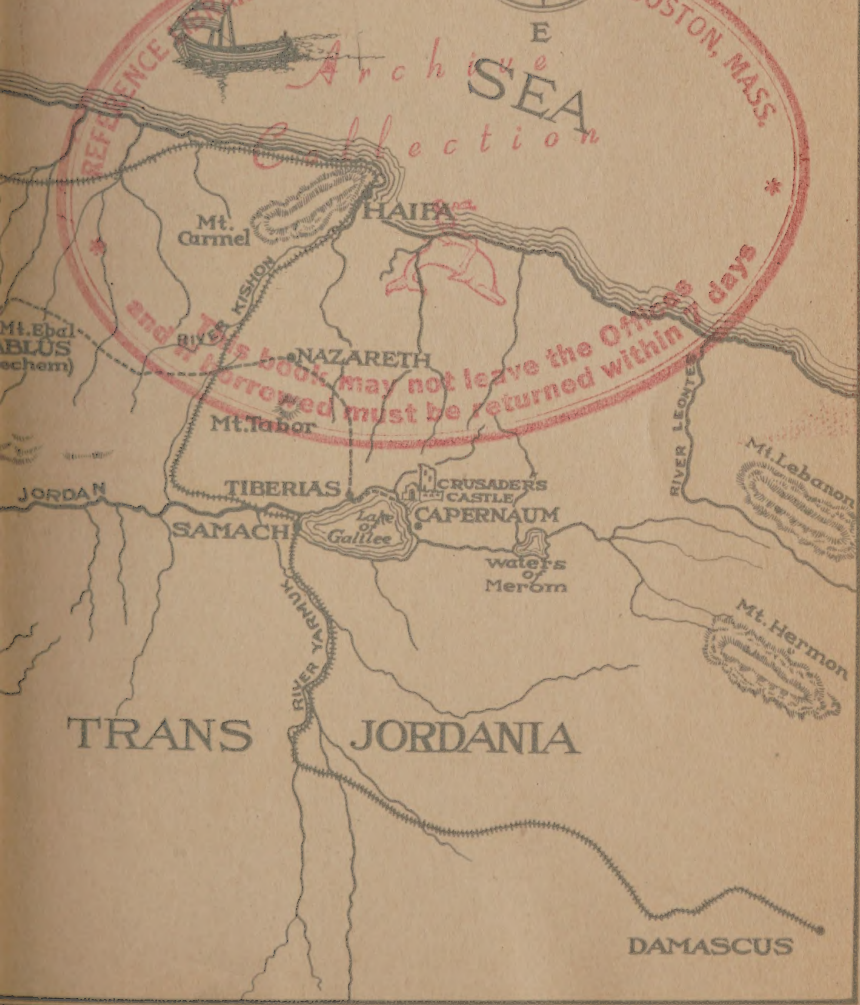
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"HOUSE OF BREAD"

+++++ RAILROADS

MILES



EAN



DAMASCUS



CRUSADERS' GOLD .



SHE WANTED, MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE, TO FIND
HER FATHER (page 259)

CRUSADERS' GOLD

A Story for Girls

BY
ANNE D. KYLE



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TO
MY FATHER
'THE PROFESSOR'
OF THIS BOOK

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CRUSADERS' GOLD



CHAPTER I

EGYPT'S NIGHT

DARK fell so promptly after the sun went down that Daphne was disappointed. She had hoped at least to see as much of Egypt as lay between Port Saïd and Kantara, and night had snatched away her only chance. She pressed her face to the train window, lamenting to her cousin Geraldine, hunched in the seat opposite,

‘We might just as well be riding through New Jersey!’

Geraldine did not look up. She was trying to puzzle out the jokes in the old French magazine she had purloined from the lounge of the André Lebon, their second day out from Marseilles.

Daphne waited a minute, peering intently into the passing blackness, then:

‘Let that thing alone for a minute, can’t you, Gerry, and see if you can see anything. Of course, *you* can wake up to-morrow and look at it, but I can’t! I’ve always been so crazy to see Egypt and never cared a bit ——’

She stopped. It didn’t seem quite loyal to say she wasn’t interested in Palestine, when it meant being with her father there; and she hadn’t seen her father since last August, when he had started off on some archæological business in the Near East! She hurried over the pause by insisting again,

‘Do look, Gerry! I think — yes — I just saw a palm tree.’

‘Que voulez-vous, Monsieur?’ read Geraldine and slapped the magazine down on the seat, from which it immediately slid to the floor. ‘I don’t see any point to that one either!’ She got up, teetering with the unsteady swing of the train, and bent over Daphne to peer out.

‘The point doesn’t make any difference,’ put in her mother from the far corner of the first-class compartment which they had to themselves. ‘It’s your accent that counts. You’re so careless, Geraldine.’ She picked up

the magazine with fastidious finger-tips and dropped it outside in the corridor. 'You can't read that, now you've wiped up the floor with it. Heaven only knows what awful disease you might catch!'

She shook her extended fingers as if expecting a shower of germs to drop from them, and she sat up straighter than ever on the edge of the red plush seat. Daphne, looking around, wondered how she managed to stick on. Aunt May, unlike herself, seemed anxious to have as little contact with Egypt as possible.

Geraldine leaned her fair, fluffy head against the window-pane.

'I can't see a thing,' she announced. 'It's dark as Egypt's Night.' She groaned at the pun, then giggled, 'That's a better one than's in that old magazine, anyway. Oh, I did see something then, Daff, like a feather duster. There's a whole lot of them. Palm trees, all right! And there are lights ahead. We must be coming to a town.'

The train was slowing down with a series of jerks, and Geraldine, losing her balance, grabbed at Daphne's umbrella which hung from a rack above her, but it proved too slippery a strap, and she sat down abruptly in her cousin's lap.

'You'd better hang on to that umbrella yourself,' she retorted to Daphne, after Aunt May from her edge had told them to stop giggling as if they were six. 'You'll be forgetting it first thing you know. You almost did at Marseilles!'

'I couldn't,' said Daphne. 'Not really. It's too beautiful.' She admired its brown silky length with the mellow richness of ivory handle above. It was by far the most stylish umbrella she had ever owned!

'We're coming to a station.' Geraldine peered out of the window again. A constellation of yellow lights glided past, and then a glowing rectangle against which was outlined the lounging figure of a soldier.

'This can't be Kantara yet!' Daphne straightened up in alarm. 'What time is it, anyway? My watch has stopped.'

Aunt May held her wrist high. 'The light's too poor to tell. It was ridiculous of your father to have you meet him at a little way-station like this, Daphne. But it's just like him ——'

'It *is* Kantara, Daphne!' Geraldine scrambled out into the corridor. 'I can see the name. Hurry up! We've stopped!'

So Daphne Pollack, who had pictured a

lingering farewell from her aunt and pretty cousin with whom she had lived since her father went away in August, found herself jumping hastily down on a dim platform, bumping her heavy suitcase after her, and having only breath enough left to gasp 'G'bye' over her shoulder.

A whistle shrilled. The train gave a jerk.

'Good-bye!' Daphne dropped her suitcase and waved both hands to Geraldine's face at the window.

'Wait a minute!' her cousin shrieked. 'Wait a ——' Her head disappeared. The train began to move.

What was the matter? Daphne took stock. She had her bag, her purse, and — but where ——?

Geraldine hung out of the departing window.

'Umbrella!' she called. 'You forgot your umbrella!' — and shoved it out.

Daphne trotted down the platform — luckily Egyptian trains were slow in getting started — and grabbed the ivory handle.

'Third time's the charm, remember,' Gerry shouted down at her. 'And Mother says, don't forget you're meeting us in Ma-ay!'

The last word trailed back faintly, for the engine had at last made up its mind. The

Cairo Express was whisked away into the darkness with a roar of steam and a surprised twinkle of lights.

For a moment Daphne stood quite still, staring down the empty track. Then she turned and went slowly back to her suitcase. It had begun to sweep over her that she was here alone. Some one was indeed standing beside her suitcase, but it was not her father; it was a huge Egyptian she had never seen before. When she came near he picked her bag up, set it on his head, and walked off with it.

‘Here, where are you going?’ Her voice squeaked like a frightened child’s. Trouble was piling itself on trouble. She had almost left her umbrella behind, her precious umbrella, given her in Paris by Aunt May. And now her suitcase was being stolen from her very feet! All her clothes were in it, too. She didn’t have many — counted by Geraldine’s wardrobe — but they were very necessary just the same! And, besides, a scared refrain, which had begun when first she dropped unassisted from the train, had increased appallingly within her.

‘Father isn’t here! What shall I do?’

On shipboard, in Europe, she had felt so grown-up — fifteen-past *was* grown up over here, old enough to be married even! — but

now she was shrinking as fast as if she nibbled Alice-in-Wonderland's famous cake. She heard herself saying in a small voice that did not sound impressive even in her own ears,

‘You put that right down!’

The man stopped, and protested in a succession of queer gutturals. He pointed into the darkness. Daphne looked around for help. Where *was* her father? His telegram, received that morning when they docked at Port Saïd, had said distinctly that she was to take the afternoon express and get off at Kantara, where he would be waiting — and he wasn't!

‘You are looking for some one?’

The voice, kind and a little hesitant, as if its owner were afraid of intruding, made her turn around with a quick gasp of relief.

‘Yes, my father — he was to meet me.’

Her troubled gray eyes looked up into the bright blue ones of an exceedingly tall Englishman. He smiled at her and little fans of whimsical wrinkles opened at the corners of his eyes. It was just, remembered Daphne, the way her father smiled. The long, kind face was not unlike her father's either, though it was more tanned, and the neat mustache and close-cut hair too fair. Nevertheless, the resemblance comforted her and that slight air of diffidence

with which he addressed her was reassuring.

'You seem to be having trouble making your man understand. Where did you want your bag taken?'

'Nowhere!' said Daphne promptly. 'He picked it up and started off with it himself.'

'Ya Wellad!' The Englishman called, 'Oh boy!' and added something briefly in Arabic.

The 'boy' salaamed, removed the suitcase from his head, and set it at Daphne's feet. Then he withdrew to the station wall against which he squatted with an air of injured innocence.

'There you are!' The Englishman laughed. 'He was bent on carrying it over the canal and standing guard by it until train-time — for a fat baksheesh, of course! You say you are expecting your father?'

'Yes.' Daphne looked around the station once more. In one corner a group of natives huddled, their dark robes drawn closely about them because of the cold. At the doorway a Sikh soldier stood on guard. The pale glow from within illumined his inscrutable Indian face and smooth mound of turban, and was impaled on the rigid point of his bayonet. Beyond, in a latticed enclosure, three Turks were

sipping coffee. The same light dropped on their white fingers through which slipped unceasingly their amber conversation beads. There was no one else in sight. Daphne turned again to the Englishman beside her. She found him staring down at her in a kind of admiring disapproval.

‘You Americans!’ he ejaculated. ‘The way you let your girls go around by themselves! And Alice has never even traveled to Cornwall alone!’

‘Is Alice your daughter?’ Daphne’s eyes still swept the night in a vain hope of discovering her father’s long form.

‘No, my niece. I’ve only a boy, Vail.’ And, nodding his head in the direction of the desert: ‘He’s over there with our luggage. I stayed behind to hunt up the trunk. You see he’s only just landed at Alexandria. But about your father. Are you sure you’ve made no mistake about the place?’

Daphne took the folded telegram from her purse and gave it to him. ‘He had to stop at a place called Zag-a-zig to see some new excavations — he’s an archæologist, you know — so instead of meeting me at Port Saïd, the way he planned, he was going to wait here for me.’

‘Hm.’ He was scanning the telegram

thoughtfully. 'Zag-a-zig, eh? Then he should have been on our train. But he wasn't, I'm sure of that.' He handed her the sheet of paper. 'I don't doubt that he merely missed it. He'll be along by the next, right enough!'

'Oh, there *is* another one, then?'

'Yes, the late one from Cairo. And we might inquire of the station-master if there's a message for you. Wouldn't your father have telegraphed if he missed the train?'

'I never thought of that! But how can I ever make the agent understand?' Daphne felt so helpless.

'I'll find out, if you like. Meanwhile, hadn't you better go into the woman's waiting-room? It's cold out here. Ya Wellad!'

He summoned the large Egyptian.

'He'll put your bag inside for you. Don't give him any tip no matter how much he insists. Later will be time enough. By the way, if I'm to ask for a telegram, I shall have to know your name.'

'It's Daphne Pollack,' she told him.

'And mine is Atherton — Colonel Allan Atherton — in spite of these "mufti" days.' He looked down at his civilian suit and smiled.

In the little waiting-room, Daphne sat down

on the bench nearest the door and waited for him to return. There were other travelers in here. A group of Jewish women sat in a row on the opposite bench. Daphne eyed them curiously, wondering if they, too, were waiting for the night train to Jerusalem. They were old and fat and wore white kerchiefs over their stringy gray hair. They stared at Daphne with small bright eyes which, embedded in fine networks of wrinkles, were like round spiders in the center of a web. Now and then they chattered to each other in a queer jargon of their own.

Presently Colonel Atherton poked his head in.

‘No luck,’ he informed her. ‘The agent insists there is nothing. That probably means nothing more than that he’s too lazy to look. I’m quite sure your father will be along on the next train. Are you all right? May I get you something? Coffee? Tea? You’ve a long wait, you know.’

She assured him she wanted nothing and curled up as comfortably as she could on the hard bench. She had nothing to do but think, and thinking produced a dull ache of self-pity in her heart. She pictured her aunt and Geraldine riding on to Cairo. Soon they would be

there, and they'd go to Shepheard's Hotel and crawl into bed —

Tears filled Daphne's eyes. For an instant the room swam and the fat old women became irregular lumps. She jerked her head up stiffly. She mustn't cry or that little dimpled scar at the corner of one eye, where as a baby she had jabbed herself with her mother's scissors, would be dyed a telltale red. Daphne was proud. She couldn't bear to have her father hold her off to look at her, and say quizzically, 'What's up, ducky?' She couldn't tell him on the very first night that she was homesick for her Aunt May and Geraldine! That she didn't want to go to Palestine one least little bit! Yet, that was what it amounted to. It was not just that she had arrived at Kantara unmet. Daphne, always honest, admitted it.

Oh, of course she did want to see her father — they had always been good friends — having only each other to turn to as far back as Daphne's memory reached. She wanted him, yes — but she wanted other things too! She told herself that it was Geraldine's company she longed for. Yet she knew there was something more. She wanted the 'fleshpots' which she had enjoyed ever since she had been with Aunt May. Daphne had taken to luxury like

a fish to water. Not that Aunt May was extravagantly rich, but she seemed so to Daphne, who was a professor's daughter and brought up on the limitations of a professor's salary. Aunt May had been very kind too in spite of the fact that she was only an aunt-in-law. Here Daphne leaned forward to make sure of the umbrella which was only one evidence of that kindness. Her slight movement sent it clattering to the floor and set the old women to cackling like startled hens. Daphne flushed, and slid it behind her on the seat so that it could not fall again. Then she resumed her dreamings.

Aunt May wanted her to meet them in Italy. It was pleasant to know they wanted her; pleasant to be urged. Geraldine had talked about it frequently on the *André Lebon*. Geraldine, who had everything she wanted in this world, wasn't a bit 'stuck-up' ever — that is, not really stuck-up. Not with Daphne! As for Aunt May — well, if it hadn't been for her, she would have had to come direct to Egypt from New York. Her father couldn't have afforded London and Paris and that lovely week on the Riviera that made her long, simply *long*, to see Italy. Daphne sighed, and drooped in her seat. She had been up very early that

morning and now she was tired. She thought, drowsily, of those sparkling days on the Mediterranean, of the people whom she had met on board ship. Some of them were going on and on — to India, and China, for the André Lebon was headed far East and would stop barely a day in Port Saïd. What fun to have gone on with it! She had hated getting off, perhaps because she hadn't been seasick on the Mediterranean as she was on the Atlantic. Or perhaps it was because the André Lebon had meant the end of the dear days of fleshpots. She would give a lot, she told herself, for one more sight of that great white ship!

Her thoughts drifted lightly, like sea-birds on a swinging ocean. Italy . . . in May . . . It was the end of January now . . . By May her father might let her go to Italy. Why did the University want him to stay in Palestine so long? What was the use of finding old things, anyway? Musty things . . . but Italy in May. . . !

The women still whispered together, but Daphne, nodding, forgot them utterly. She was tired — and alone — but May was ahead . . .

She was roused by a roar and a commotion outside. She struggled to wake up, dazed, and

then remembering. The train! And if her father wasn't on it? — But he was! He was!

She saw him, swinging down from a compartment, and striding across the platform, looking right and left —

‘Father — *Dad!*’

He was just the way he always was, blinking anxiously around, not seeing her until she jumped at him and caught his arm in both her hands.

‘Here I am!’

‘Daffy!’

His long arms went round her and swept aside, for the present, all those disloyal hopes and plans that had spun themselves like nasty webs across the brightness of her affection. She clung to him as they walked across the platform together.

‘Yes, of course, I was a little scared just at first,’ she admitted, ‘but a nice Englishman, named — oh, there he is! He came all right, Colonel Atherton.’

The Colonel was stepping out of the station office, a telegram in his hand.

‘That beggar in there just found it. He probably had it hours ago.’

‘Why,’ said Professor Pollack, ‘I sent it as soon as I found I’d missed the train. My watch

went back on me, you see — and the donkey-boy lied about the time. He had some more ruins up his sleeve to show me. I'm glad my daughter fell into good hands,' and he held out his own to Colonel Atherton.

'It was a pleasure,' protested that gentleman, reddening before Dr. Pollack's warm thanks and Daphne's grateful smile. And he added quickly, 'Are you to be long in Jerusalem?'

'A year at least,' said Dr. Pollack. 'My University sent me out to take up some work which was started before the War.'

'In that case, perhaps we may see something of each other. I have lived there ever since Allenby came in '18, and this year my boy's going to be out with me. You and I are both in luck, I take it,' with a twinkle for Daphne. Then, with a courteous farewell, he left them.

'Now, Daffy —' the Professor felt in his pockets — 'you stay here with the things while I attend to the passports. We haven't any too much time.'

In a little while he returned.

'All right! We'd better skip along. You never can tell when the bridge will open and hold us up. Where's your bag?'

‘In there.’ Daphne pointed to it standing in the doorway.

The Professor called the big porter and they started off. The path through the darkness was narrow and uneven. Daphne kept as close as possible to her father’s heels. Soon she saw the bank of the Suez Canal on her left, and found herself stepping on a wooden bridge that swayed beneath her. It made her giddy and she stopped and clung to the rail. Her father, still striding ahead, called back cheerfully:

‘Coming, Daphne? It’s a pontoon bridge. See the boats?’

A pontoon bridge. She had read of such things. Peeping over, she could see, on the smooth, light-splashed waters, a row of black-pointed prows.

‘There’s a ship coming; good thing we’re over!’

Daphne looked up. Far up the narrow line of canal a light like a round, unwinking eye bore coldly down upon them. Yes, it *was* a good thing they were getting across. And then she clutched at her side and gasped. She didn’t have her umbrella! She knew exactly where it was too — on the bench in the waiting-room. Meeting her father had pushed everything else out of her mind. Well, Gerry had said that the third time would be the charm!

Daphne hesitated. In front, her father strode after the porter, assured that she was following close. Behind, on the bank, the station lights still twinkled and up the canal that great white eye glared malignantly. It couldn't be very close yet. She turned and ran back along the unsteady bridge and up the sand to the station; back into the deserted waiting-room. Yes, there was the umbrella lying on the bench just as she had left it! She picked it up and raced again for the bridge.

As she neared it she saw that the light was much nearer. She seemed to be stepping directly into it. The intense brilliance made her blink, but she ran on unsteadily, trying not to look. And then she stopped in horror, for the bridge was opening in front of her! Even as she paused the black gap widened. She pressed her hand to her mouth to hold back the scream that rose in her throat. She glared wildly around. The approaching eye leered.

'Daphne!'

Her father's voice roused her sharply from her panic.

'*Hurry!* You can make it. I'll catch you!'

She could see him standing just beyond the opening which she was aware, dimly, had become no wider. But it could not be held so

long, for the ship was coming on steadily. Daphne shuddered.

‘Jump, daughter! I’ll catch you.’

As a little girl he had often said that to her, and she had dropped fearlessly into his arms from anything, certain that he would not fail her. It had been a long time since they had played that old game of Faith, but Daphne remembered it as she gave a run and jumped.

For an instant the waters of the Canal swirled beneath her, and then she was safe on the other side, trembling in her father’s clasp, her arms still hugging the umbrella.

‘I couldn’t leave it!’ she gasped; ‘you see it’s from Paris. Aunt May gave it to me. But I’ll never forget anything again. Never! Never!’

As they walked toward the train that waited, panting, on the edge of the midnight desert, Daphne looked back. The ship was just sliding through the drawbridge, its portholes so many small eyes of light, its one great orb searching the dark waters ahead. And for an instant as it passed, the name at the bow was picked sharply out of the night. It was the André Lebon.

CHAPTER II

JERUSALEM THE GOLDEN

THEY were at Jerusalem at last — ‘Jerusalem the Golden.’

Daphne thought of the old hymn as she shivered on the station platform while an ancient porter strung their bags on his strap like beads on a string. There was certainly nothing golden about it to-day. Wherever she looked was only grayness — gray mud, gray hills, gray sky. The wind that blew the low clouds along was raw and wintry. And she had thought she was coming to a tropical place! She shivered harder than ever.

Colonel Atherton, getting out of the forward *wagon-lits*, saw her and came back. He was followed by a tall boy. Daphne forgot the cold as she noted that he must be about seventeen, and was fair and blue-eyed like the Colonel.

‘I see you survived the rocky night,’ the latter greeted her cheerfully. ‘Sorry it’s such a bad day — the city isn’t at her best in the rain, I’m afraid.’ He turned, ‘I want my son, Vail, to meet you ——’

Daphne felt a bit fluttered as she held out

her hand. She wished Gerry could see the handsome boy. Gerry set such store by good looks. But if Vail were correspondingly impressed, he concealed it.

‘Glad to know you,’ he responded in a very English voice, and his glance swept Daphne in a cool, faintly amused way that left her tongue-tied even while it nettled her.

She ignored him pointedly as she addressed his father.

‘But I don’t see any city, Colonel Atherton. There’s nothing but mud and — and landscape.’

‘Oh, it’s here right enough. See that gray wall up on the hill? The city’s inside it, at least the old part is. Well, if we can be of no particular assistance, I think we’ll be going. But we’ll see you soon again. The best of luck.’

Vail nodded his farewell, smiling faintly, and they passed on.

Daphne followed her father gingerly to the rickety Victoria into which the old porter was unstringing their luggage. It didn’t look as if it could possibly hold together long enough to get them to their destination.

‘Get in, daughter!’ Her father gave her a boost and crawled in after her, doubling up his long legs. The horse started off at a dead run.

They rocked and skidded uphill, the wheels sending out mucky sprays in all directions.

'There's the wall, Daphne.' Professor Pollock pointed to the great mass of masonry on their right. It was solid, gray, forbidding. The rain made shining courses down its stones. 'You'll see the Jaffa Gate in a minute, and the breach beside it that was made for the German Kaiser before the War. He wouldn't "enter in by the strait gate" — wanted a broader! When General Allenby entered, however, in 1918, he used the proper one, going through it on foot, as the Crusaders did. Interesting, isn't it?'

But Daphne, though she peered out obediently at the gaping wall and the stern old gate beyond with its steady stream of men and women, of camels, donkeys, and motor cars, could not manage to rouse more than a lukewarm enthusiasm. With every revolution of the wobbly wheels her spirits were sinking low and lower. Her eyelids burned unbearably — she had slept little the night before — and there was a weight upon her chest that made it difficult to speak. She hoped they would reach their destination soon.

They went on, up one soaking thoroughfare and down another. This was the new part of

Jerusalem, her father told her, apparently not noticing her ominous silence; there was more of the city outside the walls nowadays than in. On and on. The rain sluiced from the carriage top and dripped through in so many places you couldn't possibly avoid them all. Daphne gave up the attempt finally and sat huddled into her corner while a tiny waterfall hit her shoulder and cascaded down her coat-sleeve. She eyed its course with forlorn and listless eyes.

At last they stopped in a slimy lane before a great iron gate and a stone wall topped with bits of broken bottles.

'Here we are, ducky, home at last.'

Home!

Inside, a path, ankle-deep in mud, led to a forlorn yard where weeds bent double with the rain. A fig tree, naked and sprawling, stood in the far corner, and in front loomed a square stone house upon whose uncovered veranda the rain splashed in innumerable puddles. As Daphne picked her way up the uneven steps, the front door opened. A large neat woman waited for them on the threshold.

'This is Frau Weisz, Daphne, who is going to take care of us while we're here.'

Frau Weisz took Daphne's cold hand in both of her moist ones. 'Grüss Gott, Liebchen! and

come in, come in! You are very welcome.' She stood aside, smiling, and smoothing down her enormous white apron with nervous pats.

Daphne stepped into a great gloomy room, whose chill penetrated even the warm wool of her coat. She stood quite still and looked about her slowly. Four divans were ranged against the bare discolored walls. A massive black table stood in the center of the floor. A shabby morris chair was drawn up beside it. Against opposite walls, like two prim ladies facing each other, were straight high-backed chairs, with uneven haircloth seats. A chubby stove was wedged between one of them and a neighboring divan. It smelled of polish and was quite cold.

'When I am alone, I use not this room. Wood costs so much to burn. And I did not know if you would wish to buy. But, if you like, I will make the fire now?' Frau Weisz waited.

'We certainly would like!' The Professor rubbed his hands together and shivered. 'Br-r! We Americans like lots of heat, Frau Weisz; isn't that so, ducky?'

But Daphne did not answer. She stared up at the high ceiling barely discernible in the shadows above her; she stared down at the

ugly furniture. And for a minute she closed her eyes tightly to ease the awful ache behind them.

She must not, must not, cry now — not until she was alone and could have it out! Oh, Aunt May and Gerry down in sunny Egypt! And all those dear, happy days of the past year!

‘If you wish, Fräulein, I will show you to your bedroom and then, perhaps, after the long journey, some hot water you would like.’

It rained and rained. Each morning Daphne awoke to find beyond her great barred windows the same monotonous gray of sky, so dark and dismal it was hard to tell sometimes where night stopped and day began.

‘I wish it were night instead of morning!’ she would think as she dressed shivering. For then another monotonous day would be over.

Daily the rain drifted in cold gusts against the panes. The yard outside was gradually transformed into a Slough of Despond. There was nothing to do but eat and sleep and write long letters to Gerry, which began always with the same refrain:

‘You simply can’t imagine how terrible this place is!’

‘It’s so cold I have to wear my coat in the house,’ wrote Daphne on the fifth day after

their arrival. It was, of course, not the first time she had told Gerry that. 'It wouldn't be so bad if I had some one to talk to. But Father's always busy and I get so tired of Frau Weisz — she sticks her verbs in such funny places.' She paused, tapping her teeth with the handle of her pen. If only the Athertons would come to call! Even to hear Vail patronize her would be something. But the rain, which had kept her house-bound, had evidently done the same to them. She went on writing: 'This house is like a flat — the bedrooms open right on to the living-room. The one next to mine used to belong to a Mr. Manning. Frau Weisz made a face when she told me — guess she didn't like him. She liked Dr. Parrish, though. He used to be at our University once, but I don't remember him. He died before the War and his stuff's here yet.

'Frau Weisz says that the "Herr Professor," as she always calls him, used to call her place "Bethlehem," which means "House of Bread." Dad says that was his nice way of saying that she wasn't stingy with her hospitality. I think it ought to be called the House of Bread Pudding myself, for it's the only dessert Frau Weisz seems to know how to make!

'Oh, Gerry, if it wasn't for Italy in May I

could never, never stand it! I haven't said anything to Father yet — it's too soon to be tactful, but ——'

'Well, ducky, managing to amuse yourself?' He came out of the study, a book in his hand, and she turned the page over quickly.

'I'm writing to Gerry.'

'I thought you just wrote to Gerry.'

'I did, but ——' Daphne's reply was a little sharp. 'They're sailing back to France in a couple of days and, if I don't write this, she won't get one for ages. Besides,' she added, 'what else is there to do?'

'Might try a little studying. Didn't you bring any schoolbooks with you?'

'Schoolbooks? Goodness, no!' That had been one of the few compensations for Palestine — being able to leave lessons behind. 'Besides, Aunt May said any time we had, we ought to use in improving our French. I learned a lot while we were in Paris, but I think I've forgotten it all by now.'

'You mustn't do that, ducky! That's one reason why I brought you out this book. It's interesting even if archæological, and it will help you to keep your French up, too.'

Daphne made a little face, but she held out her hand resignedly.

'Wait a minute.' Her father was turning over the faintly yellowed pages. 'You don't need to wade through all of it. There's one bit . . . I think you'll enjoy . . . Here!' He laid the book down on her lap. 'Les Reliques du Crusades' was its title. 'It's all about knights in armor.'

Daphne turned the book sideways to read the notes which some one — presumably Dr. Parrish — had made in the margin long ago.

'Original MSS. French monastery,' one said. The date was more than twelve years old. Farther down was another one:

'Eureka!'

Eureka? Wasn't that what Archimedes said when he jumped out of the bathtub? It had something to do with Physics — or was it Chemistry? Anyway, what was it doing here?

'What does *Eureka* mean, Father?'

He paused at the study door. '*I have found it* — that's Greek, ducky. Do you notice the date below? Dr. Parrish wrote that barely a week before he died. I'm wondering if perhaps it doesn't have something to do with the work he was engaged in — the work I've come over to finish. Think I'll go to the French monastery to-morrow and see if the original's still there. You'd better be starting on that text,

my dear, if you hope to improve your accent before lunch.'

She turned the book around and began on the first sentence, diffidently. It was full of words she had never heard of.

'*I, Gilles de Crex, Knight of Normandy and Soldier of the Cross,*' she presently deciphered, with the aid of a dictionary, '*faithful likewise to my liege lord Richard Plantagenet, called the Lion-Heart.*'

Richard the Lion-Heart? That was a name she knew from 'Ivanhoe.' She read on with slightly heightened interest,

'Being come to death at last, do hereby recount by the hand of Brother . . .'

'Lunch,' announced Frau Weisz succinctly, and not too regretful at the interruption, Daphne slapped the book shut and rose.

'Leave it in my room, will you, ducky?' her father told her. 'I want to read it myself later.'

At lunch, he looked out the window. 'I believe it's clearing, Daphne. If it does, we'll go for a good walk.'

The sun was shedding a mild gold light across the gray when they started out. The air brought the color to Daphne's cheeks, and made her dig her hands deep in her pockets.

Clouds rose like smoke from the encircling hills.

'I think the weather's going to be fine now,' declared her father. 'I'm glad for your sake, ducky. Of course, I have my work to do, rain or no rain, but I'm afraid it's been pretty hard on you.'

'Did you have to come over here to read those books?' asked Daphne, thinking of the one he had brought her this morning. 'Couldn't you have bought them at home ——' She stopped, her courage failing her. She had meant to say, 'So we shouldn't have to stay in this awful place?' — but she changed it lamely to 'So you wouldn't have to spend so much money?'

He laughed. 'Oh, the University's doing that. That's how I can afford to bring you over to keep me company.' He patted her shoulder companionably, and Daphne, who had opened her mouth to say something about Italy in May, closed it again.

'Besides,' he went on, 'I'm not going to spend all my time in that study. It's only until I can find out what Don Parrish was doing. You see, in a way this work I hope to do is a sort of trust. Don Parrish was my very good friend, daughter, and if I can only finish the

task he started, I shall see he gets all the credit death cheated him of. For it was to me only that he wrote long ago, saying he was sure he was on the track of an important discovery, and that he would tell me all the details when he had more time. He died before that second letter was written, Daffy! But I know Don well enough to be certain he had good cause for his convictions. That, together with rumors I heard afterwards, made me pretty positive his death had occurred at the crucial moment of his search, and might even have been occasioned by it.

‘I’d have come out long ago if it hadn’t been for the War and the fact that I had a terrible time making the University see things as I did. It didn’t mind sending me over to get materials for a course on Ephesus and Troy, because they had already been discovered, but to hunt for something that wasn’t and might never be, was another matter. It was only when Tut-ankh-amen made such a hit that they finally decided to risk it ——’

‘Oh, Dad!’ — Daphne side-stepped a mud-hole. ‘If you do find it, will you get rich and famous too, and have your picture in the Sunday newspaper?’ This was a new aspect to the case — especially the rich part. Daphne had

not forgotten the fleshpots of the past year. But her father promptly discouraged that.

‘Whatever there is in it would just go into more explorations. Archæology isn’t a get-rich-quick scheme like inventing a new alarm clock, Daphne. You do it because you know that anything is worth while which adds another figure to the sum of the world’s knowledge,’ he smiled. ‘That sounds rather preachy, and of course I’ll admit if your dad does finish up Dr. Parrish’s work with a flourish, the University may make him head of the department when Dr. Birch resigns, in which case we’d be slightly better off financially — if you want to look at it that way. But hullo, look who’s coming!’

It was the Colonel and Vail Atherton, and with them was an enormous dog.

‘We were just coming over to call.’ The Colonel smiled down into Daphne’s lighted face as he took her hand.

‘Then we’ll go back ——’ she sparkled up at him. She felt suddenly much happier than she had done for days.

‘Oh, no, we wouldn’t have you do that,’ Vail cut in. ‘Why can’t we walk a bit instead? It’s too jolly an afternoon to spend indoors anyway.’

Daphne appraised him with a swift upward

glance. He had lost some of that lordly indifference which had so nettled her at the station. Probably the wet weather had soaked it out of him. She even imagined there was something sheepish in the grin with which he answered her quick look. But he only said:

‘Like my dog?’

‘Ye-es.’ Daphne eyed it dubiously. There was so much dog to be liked. ‘What’s his name?’

‘It isn’t a he, it’s a she, and her name is Lady Clare’ — and to the dog: ‘Meet Miss Pollack, old girl!’

Lady acknowledged the introduction with dignity. She laid one great paw on Daphne’s hand, and looked at her with eyes that seemed to be contemplating something far beyond.

‘I’ve never seen anything so enormous!’ Daphne exclaimed honestly. ‘I’d hate to meet her if she didn’t know me.’

‘Oh, she’d hardly eat you up.’ Vail’s blue eyes grew wicked. ‘Her temper’s usually in inverse ratio to her size — isn’t it, Lady?’

The dog shifted her soft remote gaze from Daphne’s face to his, and raised her great head until it rested against his inviting hand. Vail patted it. Here was one Lady to whom, it was very evident, he was not at all indifferent!

'She's a Great Dane, you know,' he told Daphne, who was watching these mutual indications of friendliness with something very like envy curling itself about her heart. 'Dad's had her from a puppy. She was born under fire on Nebi Samwil. Her mother was the brigade mascot. I've been frightfully keen to see her — heard so much about her, you know — so we went down to Ain Karim first thing and brought her up with us. She stays at our house down there when Dad's away.'

They walked together with Lady Clare sedately pacing between them and the two fathers striding on ahead.

'How about some tennis, as soon as the ground dries a bit?' Vail suggested presently. 'There's a court over at the Vicarage, Dad says, that we can use —— You play, don't you?' as Daphne did not interrupt to express her delight. That slight hint of patronage slipped into his tone again.

'Ah, yes, of course.' Daphne made hers quite as lofty, and she did not add, as she might have earlier, 'Though not awfully well.'

'Righto,' said Vail with satisfaction.

So when they parted after a good hour of brisk walking, it was with the understanding that Daphne and her father were to drop in for

a bit of tea at the Athertons' the following Wednesday, with tennis afterward if the court was in condition.

A low sun was setting fire to the last of the storm clouds beyond Nebi Samwil, whose white minaret was like a beacon shining on a sea of hills, when they reached their own gate again. Feeling more cheerful than she had done for many a day, Daphne ran up the steps and opened the front door.

CHAPTER III

UNEXPECTED GUESTS

‘GOOD-EVENING,’ said an unfamiliar voice. ‘Hope I haven’t given you a start.’

Daphne stopped abruptly. A man had drawn the morris chair up before the stove and had made himself comfortable in it.

‘Better close that door,’ he advised her as she stood staring at him in utter astonishment. ‘Can’t waste the heat, you know.’ Then, as Dr. Pollack propelled her gently inside and followed, he rose, stretching himself like a cat. ‘Glad to meet you, Professor. Hadn’t any idea you were here yet. My name’s Manning, Mawson Manning. I see you’ve heard of me . . .’

‘Wait a minute,’ said the bewildered Professor. ‘I didn’t quite get it — Maddock, you say? Oh, Manning! Yes, I believe Frau Weisz has mentioned you. You were here with my friend Dr. Parrish, weren’t you? Have you been back long?’

‘Only just arrived,’ said Mr. Manning airily. ‘Don Parrish and I were great friends too. He was an odd chap, though — clever,

but close-mouthed.' And he took the comfortable chair again. Daphne gave him an indignant glance as she removed her hat and coat. You might think *he* was the host and they the unexpected guests!

Mr. Manning talked all through dinner. No one else got a word in edgewise. Frau Weisz served him with a non-committal air that Daphne was certain signified disapproval and her respect for that German lady's discrimination increased perceptibly. As for herself, she wondered which she disliked most; — his crimped hair, or his nose that dipped downward at the end, or his light eyes that looked as if he were thinking something quite different from what he was saying.

Occasionally she listened to the conversation, though she found it too technical to be very interesting.

'I happened to be at Beersheba,' Mr. Manning was saying in response to some question of her father's, 'so I really know nothing about it.'

'But there must have been rumors. Some trouble with the Moslems, wasn't there? I heard it really caused his death.'

'Mm — shouldn't wonder,' responded Mr. Manning, drumming lightly on the tablecloth

until he made Daphne nervous. 'Don was apt to be a little indiscreet at times in his zeal for archæology. When I got back he was already dead of pneumonia and the consul advised me to get out of the city, which was in a terrible uproar at the time. But whether there was any connection between the two ——'

'Even dervishes don't start a riot for nothing,' said the Professor almost impatiently. 'They must have thought that some one had been desecrating one of their holy places.'

'Well, you seem to know as much about it as I, Professor,' returned Mr. Manning, in a tone that added, 'So why ask?' 'Come to think of it, I believe they did declare he'd been poking round too close to their precious mosque.' And with that he changed the subject casually to a discussion of Arabs, their faults and virtues.

'I don't like him,' thought Daphne, as they rose from the table; 'he talks too much.'

'Yes,' Mr. Manning made a bee line for the morris chair, 'I'm going to write a book about them. That's why I'm back. Wanted to do it before, but the War stopped me, and then one thing or another.'

But Dr. Pollack's mind was still too engrossed in the former theme to be totally side-tracked.

‘And you haven’t an idea whether Parrish actually found what he was after or what sort of thing it was — or —?’

‘Heavens, no. It wasn’t in my line. One thing sure, he didn’t get anything, or he’d have left me directions as to what to do with it. There was nobody else here, you see, but Frau Weisz, who isn’t exactly the person you’d confide scientific secrets to. To tell the truth I shouldn’t wonder if the whole thing was a product of his imagination ——’

Late that night Daphne roused herself on one elbow and listened. She had thought she heard some one moving in the living-room. She slid out of bed and opened her door cautiously. The room was dark and empty, but in the little study that had been the dead archæologist’s, a thin line of light marked the partly opened door. Some one was still up.

But if it was Mr. Manning who kept such late hours, he showed no sign of it next morning. He was already at the breakfast table when Daphne took her place and he greeted her almost cordially.

‘My, but it’s good to be back,’ he declared to Dr. Pollack, who looked as if he had spent a wakeful night. ‘I hope you won’t object to my dropping in on you once in a while. Like

to recover my digestion, you know, after too many Bedouin meals.' He laughed. 'You see when Don was alive I got to regarding this as home and — but of course if it puts you out at all, I wouldn't think of it.'

The Professor inclined his head a little wearily. 'You're welcome to come and go as you please, if Frau Weisz doesn't object. Of course you'll have to take things as you find them, if you turn up suddenly ——'

'Don't worry about *that*.' Mr. Manning flipped a nonchalant hand. 'And I've already fixed it up with Frau Weisz ——'

Daphne could not help stealing a mischievous glance at the Frau, who was in the act of removing the oatmeal dishes, and was rewarded by a dark look. After breakfast she followed her out to the kitchen.

'Is he really the man you told me about, Frau Weisz?'

'Ja, so,' answered the German woman shortly and she rattled the dishes under the soapsuds.

'Dear me,' thought Daphne as she wandered back to the living-room only to find that Mr. Manning had preëmpted the best place again, 'when I wished there was some one else here to talk to, I didn't mean anybody like him!' She

had an uneasy feeling that an impish Fate had taken her at her word.

The cold weeks marched by, slow but steadily, their monotonous intervals of rain punctuated more and more frequently by days of sunshine. On one such brilliant afternoon, Daphne sat on the front steps, watching the wind-clouds blow across the sky. She was filled with a pleasant sense of anticipation, for to-morrow they were going down to Jericho with the Athertons. It had been tentatively arranged that very first day they had tea together — but one thing and another had postponed it until now. It ought to be a delightful trip, especially if Vail —— Daphne propped her elbows on her knees and considered Vail. In spite of teas and three sets of tennis on the Vicar's slippery courts, she had not yet made up her mind about him. He was like his father in a way — and yet — there was a baffling difference between them, which Daphne could not quite put her finger on. Perhaps it was because Vail looked as if he couldn't forget he was British, spelled with a big B. Only when he was sending the ball flying down the tennis court did he act, as Daphne termed it, 'natural.' If he could be like that always he would be marvelously good company.

'Wish Gerry could see him — she'd size him up all right,' she thought, and immediately took it back. Gerry with her pretty face and her grown-up ways would have made her feel very awkward and young.

Presently Daphne wriggled and looked at her watch. What was keeping her father, anyway? He had said he was only going for the mail, and when he came back they would take a drive somewhere. They always went sight-seeing together in the afternoons, while he worked at the French monastery every morning. She frowned, wondering whether it was worth while to go in and get the 'Reliques of the Crusades.' Only this noon her father had asked her if she'd finished it. He had said nothing when she told him no, but she had felt a little guilty nevertheless. Maybe she had better go in and do some now.

But at that moment the gate clicked and she rose, relieved. When she returned from Jericho she would begin in earnest, she promised her conscience, as her father appeared around the obstructing corner of the wall. He was not alone. He had two children with him and he carried a shabby old-fashioned 'telescope' in one hand.

'Hi, daughter!' he hailed her cheerfully,

‘I’ve brought you some friends. This is Kirstie Laird and — I declare, I’ve forgotten your name again.’

‘Bulie!’ the smaller of the two spoke up promptly, keeping her wide nine-year-old gaze fixed upon Daphne.

‘Beulah, Bulie,’ her sister corrected her, coloring. She took a shy step toward Daphne and held out her hand.

‘How do you do?’ politely.

‘I — how do you do?’ Daphne stammered in a bewilderment that was strongly tinged with consternation. What queer-looking chil —! But no, Kirstie wasn’t a child, she must be quite as old as Daphne herself. Yet she had her hair in a thick braid looped up and tied with a bow of plaid ribbon! Didn’t she know that nobody wore ribbons any more? It was so old-fashioned. And she had on a plain dark dress with a tight belt up under her arms instead of down on her hips where it ought to be. Beulah was a smaller edition of Kirstie except that she had two braids down her back instead of one.

Yet even while Daphne took in these discouraging details, she struggled to remember her manners.

‘Won’t you come in?’ Her glance slid then

to the bag. Goodness, were they going to stay long? Her father must have forgotten about Jericho!

‘Show them the guest room, will you, ducky?’

For Mr. Manning had departed, like Jonah of old, for Jaffa some days previously, announcing that he would probably not be back this way in a month. Daphne had said aloud that it was good riddance when he left. Such a queer person! And no sooner was he gone than two more took his place — less offensive, perhaps, but queer just the same!

‘Oh, Kirstie!’ Beulah grabbed her sister’s sleeve, as Daphne led them into the room thus opportunely vacated. ‘I believe that’s a feather bed! I always wanted to sleep in a feather bed!’ She sighed ecstatically.

‘You won’t sleep in it — you’ll sleep under it,’ Daphne corrected her.

‘And I’ve wanted to sleep in a Guest Room too,’ Beulah continued. ‘I hope we’ll stay a Long Time.’

‘Bulie! Hadn’t you better see if you’re wanted? She didn’t mean to be rude’ — Kirstie turned a worried face to Daphne — ‘Bulie never says what she means.’

‘Why, I do too!’ Beulah was indignant; but Daphne interrupted hastily:

‘You’ll find some hooks there behind that curtain to hang your things on. I have to speak to my father.’

‘We don’t have anything to unpack,’ said Beulah, ‘only our nightgowns.’

But Daphne had already fled.

‘I want you to give them a good time, ducky.’ Her father was in his own room. ‘Poor kids! Their mother’s in the hospital here. They’ve come from Tiberias, daughter — on the Lake of Galilee, you know. Beulah’s never been out of Palestine at all, and Kirstie only once.’

‘Maybe that’s why they look so funny!’ Daphne tried to imagine living in Palestine all one’s life.

‘Mm — maybe so.’ Her father paused and looked at her sharply. ‘But I hope you’re too polite to let them see you think it!’

Daphne grew red. ‘Oh, I wouldn’t! Not for worlds! But, Father — how long are they going to stay? Maybe Frau Weisz won’t like it ——’

‘I’ll fix it up with Frau Weisz — never you fear. Besides, they’ll be going to Jericho with us, at first. I asked their father, Dr. Laird, about it. Used to know him years ago when I was studying in Edinburgh. I forgot he was

over here until I ran into him at the post office. He can stay at the hospital himself, but he was worried about the girls. Their mother may be there longer than they first expected. So I offered to keep them — knew they'd be company for you.'

'Yes?' Daphne was thinking of Vail again. Would he decide all her friends looked like these? She must let him know at once she had never seen Kirstie and Beulah before today.

'Well,' she said as she turned to go, 'I only hope Mr. Manning doesn't arrive suddenly the way he did before. It would be kind of embarrassing.'

'He'd have to use that old couch in the study, that's all. But perhaps he'll be too busy gathering local color for his book to leave Jaffa for a while.'

'I wish the whale would get him!' said Daphne viciously, thinking of Jonah, and she heard her father chuckle as she recrossed the living-room. She paused, her hand on the guest-room door from behind which came sounds of Beulah washing her face under protest. Well, she might as well be resigned, she thought, they were going to Jericho. Suddenly as the squeaks and scuffles continued, her face

softened into a reluctant smile. Beulah was a comical kid!

They were eating breakfast next morning when there was a knock on the front door. 'It is the Herr Doktor Laird,' Frau Weisz announced. 'He would to the Herr Professor a minute speak.'

Kirstie sat back, paling, and Beulah's spoon fell to the floor with a clatter. 'We can't go to Jericho!' she cried despairingly.

'It must be — about — mother ——' Kirstie's gray eyes were on Dr. Pollack.

'Perhaps not,' he said kindly; 'you just sit still and I'll bring him in.'

But he did not return at once, and a gloomy silence fell on the three at the table. Beulah, retrieving her spoon, ate on at her porridge, but Kirstie sat still, her eyes tragic.

'She was all right yesterday and she seemed so glad we could go to Jericho.'

'Of course she's all right,' declared Daphne. 'Listen, they're coming back.'

'Here's your father come to say good-bye, girls.' The Professor's voice was as cheerful as ever, but Daphne looking up quickly fancied an odd look in his eyes.

Dr. Laird was a little gray man. Gray mustache, gray hair, gray eyes, gray clothes.

There were tired lines on each side of his nose, but he had a happy twinkle, and when he spoke in his quaint Scotch accent, a soft chuckle seemed to play in and out among the words.

'We-ell, Kir-rstie!' He greeted his older daughter while he tickled Beulah on the neck and made her squeal. 'Your mother wud give me na peace until I came round ta see if ye had all ye needed for your journey. I'm sending home for your other clothes to-day.'

'Oh, are we going to stay long, Father?' Kirstie sounded so dismayed at the prospect that Daphne wondered, guiltily, if her consternation yesterday had been apparent. 'Is Mother worse?'

'She's fine,' said her father, 'fine! But she'll be needing a bit of a rest in the hospital. And she's so pleased that you're getting your fun the while.'

'I don't see why she has to stay in bed if she's well,' declared Beulah.

'I'm doubtin' if we'll be able to keep her there long, Bulie child.' He pulled one of her braids. 'I must be gettin' back now. Ye'll be home to-morrow night, for certain?' This to the Professor, who nodded and added irrelevantly, 'And we'll stop at the Jordan Hotel to-night.'

At the Atherton house, when they called there, only Vail came out to join them. Lady Clare escorted him as far as the gate. Beulah almost fell out of the car in her delight.

‘Oo! Isn’t he wonderful! — Please I want to pat him.’

‘It isn’t a him, it’s a her,’ corrected Vail with a sly grin at Daphne. ‘I’m sorry, but I think I’d better not let her out, or she’ll want to get in the car too. You can pat her some other time.’ And he looked curiously from Beulah’s eager face to Kirstie’s and then to Daphne again, who flushed at the amused gleam in his eyes. Indeed, she might have introduced the pair a bit ungraciously had she not happened to notice that Kirstie had shrunk shyly into her corner of the car, her face stiff and strained.

‘Why, she’s afraid,’ she thought with sudden understanding. ‘She knows she’s an extra. Maybe she realizes how queer she looks too ——’

Daphne’s head went up. Vail shouldn’t make Kirstie feel small the way he’d made her do at the station that day! And she forgot that she herself had been unpardonably snobbish as she said, in a firm voice:

‘These are my friends, Kirstie and Beulah Laird. Isn’t it nice they came in time to go

down to Jericho too?' — and she added hastily before Vail could cut in, 'Where's your father?'

'He can't come. Isn't that a jolly shame? At the last minute too! But whenever the Arabs begin to make trouble, the Government always sends for him. He left this morning, looking like a Sheikh in a cinema. But he insisted we should go on without him. The trouble's not so far north yet, though Heaven knows when it may be, and the sooner we start the better chance we have of going. Good-bye, old girl,' he gave Lady Clare a farewell pat. 'Sorry, but you can't go along, you know.' And he wedged himself into the little folding seat in front of the girls.

The Professor was already stretching his long legs in the front beside their pock-marked chauffeur, who started off at a reckless pace which threatened to shake the old Ford into bits, and which did very soon shake off any self-consciousness its occupants might have been afflicted with. It is difficult to act shy and constrained when one is being constantly hurled forward on one's nose. Before the top of the first ridge had hid the city from sight, they were hanging on tight and giggling as unreservedly as if they had known each other a long time.

CHAPTER IV

JORDAN'S STORMY BANKS

THEY cooked their lunch by the Dead Sea. Kirstie was very useful at that because of her housewifely training.

Kirstie forgot to be shy when she had something else to think about, Daphne reflected, watching her break the eggs expertly. Kirstie might be old-fashioned, but she was certainly more useful than Vail to have on a trip, especially when it came to getting lunch.

Afterwards they lay around lazily in the sand, feeling warm and well-filled and content.

'Who'd ever dream it had been cold this morning when we started,' said Daphne, turning her hat brim down to shade her eyes from the brilliant glare. 'My, but it's good to be warm for once!'

'Come see us in Tiberias,' suggested Kirstie. 'You'd be warm enough there.' While the Professor, who looked as if he was on the verge of a nap, murmured, 'We dropped four thousand feet in fifteen miles.'

'We have earthquakes, too,' volunteered

Beulah. 'They make your stomach feel funny till you get used to them.'

'You are going up-country, sometime, aren't you?'

Daphne didn't know, but the Professor opened one eye. 'Long about the first of May, I guess,' and went off to sleep.

'Oh, Daphne, maybe you will come to see us then?' Kirstie's eyes glowed. 'We've never had any one our own age to visit us.'

'I'd love to.' Daphne traced her initials in the sand. 'If I'm here in May, that is.'

'Here! — why, I thought your father was going to stay a whole year!' Even Vail stared.

'He was — I mean he is.' Daphne looked confused. 'But you see my Aunt May wants me to go to Italy with her and my cousin Geraldine. Gerry's a peach ——'

'She ought to come out here, then.' Vail squinted at the bright waves. 'She could have a jolly time, if she's the right sort.' His tone nettled Daphne.

'Oh, she wouldn't! I meant, Aunt May's delicate and I don't think Jerusalem would agree with her. She didn't even stay long in Egypt, because she was afraid she'd catch something awful, like cholera, you know.'

'Oh!' Beulah was much interested. 'There

was a tourist once in Tiberias that thought she had cholera and she made Father get up in the middle of the night to go see her. And he said she didn't at all — it was just too much to eat, and she was awful mad — wasn't she, Kirstie?'

'Oh, Bulie, you do tell such awful things!'

'I don't see why. She wasn't Daphne's aunt, was she, Daffy? I only said she reminded me of her.'

Dr. Pollack sat up with a start and pushed his hat out of his eyes.

'Good Heavens, children! We've got to be getting on!'

They rushed to pack up. Daphne deigned to give Vail some pointers. 'Here, you can stack the cups and plates. Put them in that bag over there. You can work hard now to make up for not doing much beforehand.'

Vail, reddening, glared at her. 'Why didn't you say so if you wanted me to help? Whenever I've tried to at home I'm always in the way.'

'Go on and do stop arguing.' Peace-loving Kirstie waved them apart. 'We'll never be ready. Daphne, we still have some tea left.' She shook the thermos bottle. 'Maybe we'd better keep it for later.'

Vail stalked away with his hands full of plates and cups. He returned presently.

'There, they're all dried off in the sun. I don't believe you'd get them any cleaner yourself!' But Daphne pretended to be too busy to hear.

A little while later they stood on the high bank of the Jordan while Professor Pollack went off to hunt the owner of a boat that was moored to a willow branch near by. Daphne eyed the yellow torrent with disfavor.

'Whoever thought it looked like that! I'd like to take some home just to show people how mistaken they are!'

'Lots of people do take water home,' said Kirstie, 'especially ministers. If you really want some I expect you could put it in a ginger-pop bottle.' She nodded at a tiny refreshment booth perched on the bank.

'I see an old one!' Beulah darted off.

'Don't go far,' Vail cautioned her.

Professor Pollack summoned them. 'He says we can have the boat,' and nodded at a Father Abraham whose skirts were kilted up above his bare brown bow-legs.

'Hurry, Beulah,' Kirstie called her.

But Beulah's black-stockinged legs were already streaking toward the river. She waved the ginger-ale bottle.

'What *is* that child after?' Professor Pollack stared.

Beulah had started to work down a steep bank, anchoring herself by a tuft of long grass at the top. The tuft gave way with a long-drawn, sucking sound, and Beulah, shrieking, tobogganed into the Jordan.

Fortunately, the ground shelved gently away under the water so that, after the first splash, she was not in above her knees. But the muddy bank offered no finger-hold, and her hands, clawing frantically, found only grass that came up by the roots when she grabbed at it. Her voice rose in a shrill, frightened wail.

‘Hold on, Bulie!’ Vail sprinted along the top, discarding his coat as he ran. ‘I’ll get you.’

‘She’s going to drown!’ Daphne half sobbed, and Vail turned on her sharply. ‘Don’t be silly! Can’t you see she’s scared enough?’

The Professor had also removed his coat and was preparing to crawl down the bank. Vail interfered. ‘I’m the lightest, sir; if you’ll hold my feet I’ll lean over and pull her out.’

They formed a chain, with the Professor lying flat on the bank and gripping Vail’s ankles, while Daphne and Kirstie held on to the Professor with all their might lest the combined weight of Vail and Beulah drag him, too,

into the Jordan. Behind them, Father Abraham came, panting, with a long oar.

But it was Vail who got her out.

‘Hold it!’ Daphne could hear his terse orders between his heavy breaths. ‘Don’t — let — go! Use your feet! *Walk*, I say!’

And at the end of an interminable minute there was Beulah, safe and incredibly muddy, shaking and sobbing on the bank, and Kirstie, with tears in her own voice, saying, ‘Here’s my coat, Bulie. Oh, what are we going to do — you’re just soaked!’

‘Hang her clothes on the trees. They won’t take long to dry in this sun. She can put our coats on in the meantime.’ The Professor spoke briskly. ‘Guess we’d better hang you up “on a hickory limb” too, Vail.’

Daphne, busily pulling at Beulah’s stockings, looked up. Vail was caked with mud. But he answered with a laugh, ‘You’re rather a sight yourself, Doctor Pollack!’

‘If she only had something hot to drink!’ Beulah was dry at last and swathed in coats.

Daphne suddenly remembered the tea. She rummaged for the thermos bottle and poured out a cupful.

‘Drink it fast while it’s hot,’ Kirstie commanded, and Beulah obediently gave a large

gulp. Her hands flew to her mouth and she began to choke and sputter. 'Swallow it!' Kirstie eyed her severely. 'She hates anything hot' — this to Daphne.

Beulah, pop-eyed, choked and swallowed and when she was capable of speech again — 'It wasn't hot, Kirstie, it was *awful* — it was full of salt!'

'Salt?'

'But I didn't put anything in it,' protested Daphne, 'not even sugar.'

'You must have imagined it, Bulie.' Kirstie drank some too.

'Why, it *is* salty!' She turned to Daphne. 'It tastes as if — as if ——'

'As if Lot's wife had melted in it.' Beulah had cheered up since Kirstie agreed with her.

Daphne ran her finger around the rim and applied it cautiously to her tongue. 'It's salt all right, but where ——?' Kirstie whirled, 'Vail! Vail! What did you do with those cups after lunch?'

Vail, lying full length in the sun to dry the mud on him, reared an indignant head.

'I packed 'em up the way Daphne told me to.'

'You didn't wash them first?'

'I certainly did! In the Dead Sea. What's the trouble, anyway?'

For Kirstie had begun to laugh. 'That's where the salt came from, then. Oh, dear! No wonder you looked so funny, Bulie, when you took that big mouthful! Vail, if you'd only said you were going to wash them ——'

'I did.' Vail sat up sulkily. 'I told you I'd dried them off in the sun. Why didn't you pay some sort of attention? I was only trying to help!' He began to rub his muddy coat viciously with his sleeve.

The movement filled Daphne with swift compunction. He had been trying to help — and after all it was he who had saved Beulah! She scrambled to her feet and went over to him. 'I'll clean you up, if you like. You're only making it worse.'

'Huh!' snorted Vail, but he submitted to her efforts.

'There' — Daphne straightened after a few minutes of energetic scrubbing — 'that's the best I can do now.'

'Thanks awfully.' Vail got to his feet, and added with a grin, 'You did it a lot better than I could have.'

It was well after four when they entered Jericho. Smells and dust and flies greeted

them. But the queer little 'Jordan Hotel,' when they reached it, drew them into its courtyard as with a friendly gesture of peace. Powdery fragrance of acacia, mingled with the odor of lemon blossoms, enfolded them in sweetness that must have been, thought Daphne, left over from the Garden of Eden. Palms sent cool, feathery streamers of shade across the worn old stones. This was the loveliest place that Daphne had found in Palestine and she really couldn't understand Beulah's objection to be left by herself in it while they went off to see the ruins of old Jericho before the sunset should end their day.

'Please, Kirstie, my clothes are all dry. And I've had three cups of tea so hot I felt them all the way down to my stummick, and I want to see the Wall of Jericho!' Beulah looked so near tears that Kirstie gave in.

'All right, Bulie. After all, we'll be back long before sunset.'

But it took them longer than they thought, for their Ford suddenly balked halfway back to town, and, while the chauffeur lay on his back beneath it, the sun went down behind the Judean hills and a chill came from the river marshes and made them wish for the coats

they had left at the hotel as unnecessary encumbrances.

That night, as Daphne was getting ready for bed, Kirstie knocked on her door.

‘Could I borrow your coat, Daffy? Bulie’s got both of ours over her and she can’t seem to get warm.’

CHAPTER V

THE JERICHO ROAD

‘BE ready to start in half an hour.’ The Professor pulled out his watch and held it up for the benefit of those at the breakfast table.

Beulah, over her bowl of porridge, gave a long snuffle.

‘Where’s your handkerchief, Bulie?’ Kirstie peered under the tablecloth.

‘Here’ — Beulah held it up; ‘but it doesn’t do any good to use it, Kirstie.’

‘You caught cold yesterday, didn’t you?’ Professor Pollack eyed her thoughtfully as he slipped his watch back into his pocket. ‘Perhaps we ought to go straight back to Jerusalem instead of up the Waddy Kelt.’

Loud protests ran down the table. ‘I’m not sick,’ declared Beulah, blinking; ‘I’m just stuffed up.’

And so presently they were rattling westward along the dusty road from Jericho.

Daphne looked back with regret. ‘I wish we could stay down here all the time!’ As they passed a mud wall over which a date palm

spilled its shadow — 'Just listen to that bird!'

'It's a bulbul, I think,' said Kirstie.

'My word!' Vail screwed around in his seat. 'I didn't know there was such a bird outside of the Arabian Nights!'

'There are a lot of things, Mister, that I bet you don't know,' thought Daphne, but she refrained from saying it aloud. After all, *she* hadn't known that, either!

The sun was already hot in a cloudless sky and the brown hills ahead of them were beginning to quiver when they left the car, crossed a shallow brook, and followed a meandering goat-path toward the mouth of that narrow ravine called the Waddy Kelt.

'The car will wait for us above the monastery of Saint George,' said the Professor. 'I think you'll find that a long enough climb.'

As they entered the 'Waddy,' hills desolate and bare of any softening green rose so precipitately close that it seemed as if the ravine must end beyond the next corner. Yet always, when they reached it, they found the path still leading on.

'Father, look!' said Daphne suddenly. 'Isn't that a man sitting up there by that big rock?'

'I don't see any one, Daffy.' Her father

squinted. 'This part of the country's usually quite deserted.'

'Maybe it's a shepherd,' suggested Kirstie, 'hunting for a lost sheep.'

Vail snorted. 'It would be a fool shepherd who'd bring his sheep around here! And, anyway,' he teased Daphne, 'what's so awful about one lone man that you had to yell that way?'

Daphne grew sulky. 'You ought to know! It was you who said the Arabs were on a rampage!'

'But that's east of Jordan, and, besides, my father's attending to that. It takes a Britisher to show them where to head in!'

'Huh!' said Daphne.

But the Professor, consciously or otherwise, prevented further strain on international relations by tactfully changing the subject. 'Did you know that stream below us was the Brook Cherith? This is where Elijah was fed by the ravens.'

The sun grew hotter and hotter. It pounded down on the sandstone cliffs and rose in a quivering veil of heat through which the path shimmered like a strange mirage.

Finally, ahead of them, appeared the gray walls of the monastery, clinging like a great

bat to the sheer cliff, and, as they rounded the last corner, they saw a tiny Garden of Eden, cupped deep in the palms of the protecting hills, where the north winds swirling high above could never disturb its summer serenity. Here the brook, sheathing its brightness in softer foam, tumbled through an ancient mill-race, which supplied the moisture for the slender palms and the tiny lemon orchard and the pomegranate bushes, already crowded with deep red trumpet flowers.

A stone arch carpeted with grass bridged the chasm to the entrance of this Eden and, since no angel stood with flaming sword to bar their way, they rushed across and dropped in the shade of a little lemon tree.

'My head aches.' Beulah laid her forehead on her crossed knees. She looked so limp that the Professor laid his hand on her neck.

'You're frightfully warm, child. Don't cool off too quickly. You ought to have your coat.'

'I don't want anything on me, I'm too hot now!' Beulah shrugged away. 'I don't feel a tiny bit cold. I'm burning up, truly.'

They opened out the lunch which the Jordan Hotel had prepared for them. The heavy bread and the greasy slabs of cold chicken tasted heavenly here in Paradise. Daphne

gave a long peaceful sigh as she gazed up at a fig tree putting out its clusters of new leaves. Perhaps some day, if the naked thing which filled up one corner of the yard in Jerusalem put on such dainty clothes, it too might become a thing of beauty. But to-night when she returned she knew she would find it as ugly as ever. To go back to February after this taste of May? How she hated the thought! A bee, topeavy with pollen, blundered past her nose and buried itself in the heart of a pomegranate bloom.

‘Aren’t you going to eat your chicken, Bulie?’ Kirstie leaned across Daphne to inquire.

‘I’ve had enough.’ Beulah turned up her nose at the half-eaten drumstick.

‘Why, Bulie dear, I never knew you not to eat — are you really *sick*?’ Kirstie looked frightened.

‘I’m not hungry!’ complained Beulah. ‘You made me eat too much porridge for breakfast. And I’m awful sleepy.’ Her lids drooped over her heavy eyes and all at once she flung herself in the direction of the nearest lap, which happened to be Daphne’s.

‘You poor kid!’ Daphne let her stay. ‘Go on and take a nap, and you’ll feel better.’

'We ought to be stepping along,' said Professor Pollack presently, in a low voice. 'That is, if we want to see the monastery before we go. We've got quite a climb ahead of us yet.' He considered the sleeping Beulah. 'It seems a shame to disturb her.' Daphne bent over to listen to her deep breathing. 'She must have been terribly tired to sleep like this!'

'I'll take her, Daffy,' said Kirstie. 'You go on and see the monastery.'

But something had quickened in Daphne's careless heart when the confiding weight of Beulah's head had first rested warm against her. All her life there had been people for her to cuddle up against, but seldom had any one chosen her for a comforting pillow. And though she couldn't analyze it, she found the sensation sweet. She put her arms over Beulah's unconscious shoulders with a gesture almost as motherly as Kirstie was capable of, and shook her head.

'No, it might wake her up to move her, and you know she's got to take that long walk afterwards. *You* go, Kirstie, I don't care a bit about it, honestly — I'd much rather stay here.'

Vail had sprung to his feet and waited impatiently for them to make up their minds.

‘It doesn’t take two people to watch a sleeping kid,’ he said. ‘Why don’t you leave her with Kirstie, Daphne?’

‘No, I’m going to stay here, Vail.’ But she smiled at him.

‘And I am too.’ Kirstie leaned firmly against the lemon tree. ‘It’s too hot to go across there again — really it is, Daffy. I’d much rather sit here and rest.’

‘Well, come along then.’ The Professor started off. Vail followed, his hands deep in his pockets, an annoyed cloud over his face.

‘You’d think,’ said Daphne softly, ‘that he really wanted us. And yet he acts sometimes as if we were too far beneath him to be noticed.’

Kirstie watched his slim figure lope up the little zigzag path.

‘Maybe,’ she considered, ‘it’s just that he hates being turned down, ever.’

‘He thinks,’ grumbled Daphne, ‘because he’s BRITISH and ready for Oxford that he’s better than anybody else!’

Kirstie’s eyes were on a brown-and-gold butterfly that was trying to balance itself on a papery poppy. ‘But he doesn’t always act that way — he’s been awfully nice sometimes, you know ——’

‘Yes — when he forgets what he is!’ Daph-

ne's Americanism was up in arms. It had been a jolt to discover some one who considered his nationality superior to hers. She had always taken it for granted that the rest of the world looked up to America. She had written an essay about that very thing once, at school.

Kirstie smiled. 'I'm British, too,' she reminded her.

Daphne stared. 'Well, you don't act like it!' she said.

Kirstie went on: 'Remember how quick he was yesterday about helping Beulah? And he was an awfully good sport about getting muddy himself. I don't believe it's all his fault that he's so uppity sometimes. Maybe he was just raised that way. Now that he's out here, perhaps he'll be different.'

'Well, I hope so,' said Daphne, glancing up quickly. For an instant she fancied she saw a horse standing on a neighboring hilltop. But when she looked harder, she decided she had been mistaken. There was certainly nothing there.

Her movement half woke Beulah, who gave a gurgle and said drowsily, 'Who's that?'

'She's talking in her sleep!' whispered Daphne.

‘I’m not!’ Beulah lifted her head. ‘There is some one coming.’

She was right. A thin brown man in a dirty striped skirt was trotting across the bridge. His bare feet made no sound on the soft turf.

‘*Naharak said.*’ He touched his forehead as he approached.

‘*Said imbarak,*’ returned Kirstie briefly.

‘What’s that?’ Daphne queried under her breath.

‘How dee do,’ said Beulah suddenly. Daphne felt a jar of surprise. That this little girl should know so much more than she did!

The man thrust his hand into the open ‘V’ of his Mother Hubbard gown and drew out a dirty rag tied up in a dozen knots. He squatted on his heels and, laying the bundle on the ground, began to untie one after another. At last he held up to view a small, irregular bottle in whose glass was caught the changing sheen of the sea.

‘Isn’t it pretty!’ cried Daphne. ‘Where do you think he got them all?’ for a curious collection of junk was spread out upon the grimy rag.

‘He says they’re *antikas,*’ Kirstie laughed. ‘But I doubt it. Let’s see that bottle a minute.’

Daphne handed it over admiringly. What a

lot Kirstie did know and yet *she* wasn't a bit heady about it.

Kirstie laid it down and picked up a few coins.

'These may be good,' turning them over. 'The farmers often find them in the fields.' She smiled mischievously, and began to chatter in Arabic. The man shrugged and lifted his eyebrows. If she could only understand what Kirstie was saying, thought Daphne! Beulah had apparently gone to sleep again, for she didn't bother to interpret this time.

'What is it, Kirstie?' Daphne begged finally. 'What are you talking about?'

'I said,' Kirstie laughed, 'that we weren't interested in *old* things — we liked them new. And he's swearing by Allah and the Beard of the Prophet that his brother, Ibrahim Wahabby, made these himself not two months ago!'

'Well, of all the — nerve!'

'He says he sells them up on the highroad to tourists when the monks let him off. He's the servant, you see. Every now and then he walks in to Ain Karim for a new supply.'

'Ain Karim!' Daphne remembered the name. 'Why, that's where the Athertons have a house.'

‘He says his brother is a scribe in the bazaar, and on the side he makes antiques,’ Kirstie continued to translate.

‘Imagine his standing there and admitting it!’

‘Oh, they’ll tell the truth,’ smiled Kirstie, ‘if they can gain anything by it.’

A loud hail interrupted them. Vail and the Professor were coming back.

‘It’s the dirtiest old hole!’ Vail’s sulkiness had vanished. ‘And I say, do you know there are only two monks left? Dr. Pollack got them to show us some old manuscripts they have up there — queer things, rolled on a stick — and all their gold and silver altar plate. Hullo! Has that duffer been after you?’

Dr. Pollack joined in Vail’s shout of laughter.

‘He tried to get us to invest too. I suppose he thought you looked easier. Didn’t know he was going to strike a native, did he, Kirstie? Well, I’ll give him some baksheesh — and then we’d better run along. Isn’t Beulah awake yet?’

‘Yes, I am.’ Beulah struggled up, but when they started up the steep trail which led to the top of the ravine, she stumbled so often that Kirstie declared she must be walking in her sleep.

'What are you looking at, Vail?' asked Daphne suddenly.

Vail was at the end of the procession and twice now she had had to wait for him.

'I thought,' Vail spoke uncertainly, 'that I saw some one on horseback up there, but ——'

'It must have been a mirage.' But a shiver ran up her spine as she said it. She too had thought she had seen some one!

They found the chauffeur curled in the front seat with a handkerchief over his head. He sat up at their hail, and climbed out to crank the car. Not a whisper under the hood!

'Well,' said the Professor, 'I suppose we're stuck again.'

The chauffeur cranked and cranked. Finally there was a roar.

'Get in!' shouted the Professor, swinging his long legs into the seat. They all scrambled and the car started off with a leap that sent them in a heap.

Beulah bumped her nose and began to sob gustily.

'Why, Bulie' — Kirstie examined it — 'it isn't even skinned. I'm surprised — a great big girl like you!' Beulah was certainly not like herself to-day. Even her long nap hadn't seemed to help much.

‘Look! There *is* some one on that hill!’ Daphne clutched at Vail’s sleeve.

‘There’s another!’ A second figure had appeared as if by magic. His horse reared, the fold of his *aba* billowed on the wind, and his gun, slanted across his back, made a sharp black mark against the blue of the afternoon sky. The first rider still stood motionless. Daphne saw that her father watched them sharply, a worried look on his face. He leaned over and nudged the chauffeur. That individual looked, and stepped on the gas.

A third rider appeared, a little in front of them.

The Ford objected to being urged. It choked and sputtered, hesitated, picked up again, and finally stopped dead.

‘Good Heavens!’ cried the Professor, startled into an ejaculation. ‘We can’t get stuck here, man!’

Nevertheless, it became apparent that they could, and were.

More riders came over the hill. Daphne counted ten of them. They were like white-winged buzzards lined up — watching — waiting.

Suddenly, as at some unseen signal, they started down. Midway they parted, and made

a circle about the helpless car. Then they closed in.

The leader, a wild-looking Arab on a black-and-white horse, rode up and picked the chauffeur away from the engine as if he had been a lady-bug. Then, cantering close to the car, he ordered its occupants out, with a menacing jerk of his gun.

They climbed out. Beulah, half dazed, stumbled and Vail caught her. At once they were separated into two groups — the Professor and Vail on one side, the three girls on the other. Daphne, looking around, saw everywhere dark and sullen faces glowering under flowing *kuffiehs*. She shrank against Kirstie, who stood white and silent, her hand in Beulah's. Suddenly without warning an Arab leaned from his horse and snatched at the thin gold bracelet on Daphne's wrist. It was the one her father had given her on a birthday four years back, and she had worn it so constantly that she could no longer get it off. With a moan of pain, she tried to pull her hand away as the cruel fingers closed on it. She felt the metal cut into her flesh. Her father, helpless to go to her aid, began to protest angrily. The leader spun round, and, with a sharp order in Arabic, brought down the butt of his gun on

the greedy arm. Cursing, the robber dropped her wrist and wheeled away.

‘They say if we’re hurt, the British may pay with bullets instead of money,’ Kirstie whispered to Daphne. ‘Don’t let them see I understand, though. I want to find out what they mean to do with us, if I can ——’

‘Listen, Kirstie. Vail’s trying to tell you something.’ Daphne drew her attention that way.

‘Kirstie,’ Vail was calling across the intervening space, ‘tell them I’m the son of the Sheikh Al’an. Say we’re his friends! Hurry, Kirstie!’

‘Sheikh Al’an?—*the Shereef Al’an?*’ Astonishment flushed Kirstie’s pale face. She turned and said something to the leader, who had been conferring hastily with his men. He jerked up his head and listened, scowling at first, but by degrees an odd look, half fear, half apology, softened his stern face.

Who was Vail’s father, anyway, that bandits should fear even his name? Who was the Shereef Al’an? Daphne looked wonderingly at Vail, and caught a new expression in his anxious eyes — a look of humbleness quite foreign to him.

Abruptly the outlaw chief wheeled his horse

toward Vail and sprang down with a graceful flourish. A minute he stood in silence, fierce, haughty as a wild beast of the desert. Then his *aba* swept the dust as he laid his hands upon his forehead.

‘Salaam’ — and again it was Kirstie who translated, breathlessly. ‘Peace be with you, O Son of the Friend of Hedjaz. Peace and a thousand pardons if we have inconvenienced thee.’

He sprang on his horse and at a sharp word the whole band wheeled. So suddenly, so completely, did they vanish that Daphne could have believed it all a hideous nightmare were it not for the cut upon her wrist and for the agitated faces of the others.

‘And it was your father, Vail’ — Kirstie turned to him excitedly as the trembling chauffeur returned to his examination of the Ford’s insides — ‘your father who helped the Arabs against the Turks! I’ve always heard about the Shereef Al’an and the wonderful things he did, and how the Bedouin still call him the White Prophet! It’s just like a fairy tale. But I’d never heard his English name, the Shereef Al’an. Why didn’t you tell us?’

He flushed. ‘Dad made me promise not to. He hates fuss no end ——’

‘Well, if it hadn’t been for you, Vail,’ Daphne admitted shakily, ‘I don’t know what would have happened!’

‘We’d have spent the night in some bug-ridden camp, at the very least,’ put in her father. ‘No, we can’t thank you enough, or ——’

But Vail took the words out of his mouth, courageously, ‘Yes, Kirstie *more* than me, Dr. Pollack! For if she hadn’t been able to tell them, my being the Shereef’s son wouldn’t have done us much good, I’m afraid.’

Kirstie’s cheeks burned in shy confusion. Daphne gave Vail a shining look. He was fine at heart, as Kirstie had said.

And just then the car started up a cheerful rumble as if nothing had been wrong with it. By dark they were again skirting the city wall. When they walked up the familiar path once more, the lighted windows of the House of Bread welcomed them with a homely glow that lit a tiny answering spark of friendliness in Daphne’s heart. It was good, after all, to get back.

‘I wonder,’ said Kirstie, her arm around Beulah, ‘how Mother is. Perhaps Father will come to-night.’

Frau Weisz threw open the front door. ‘The

Herr Doktor,' Daphne heard her say to the Professor, as Kirstie and Beulah disappeared into their own room, 'he has waited this afternoon a long time.' And she dropped her voice so that Daphne heard no more.

CHAPTER VI

THE LONG DAY

It seemed to Daphne, lying tired and taut under her feather bed, that night would be over and day begun before ever she got to sleep. Even the house was uneasy, with a spirit of restlessness behind which there lurked something strange and ominous. It slid away when Daphne tried to corner it — like a bad dream whose details daylight has obliterated; but nevertheless it was there. It lay in the opening and closing of a door; in tiptoed footsteps; in whispered conversation.

For Dr. Pollack had gone out after supper with no explanation of his errand, though Daphne concluded it had something to do with reporting their encounter. He returned long after she was in bed. She heard him lock the front door and slide the big bolt across. But instead of going to his own room, his footsteps went past her door and stopped at Kirstie's.

'He must have seen Dr. Laird somewhere,' she thought, and lay quietly listening to the sound of whispering in the living-room and to

Beulah, in bed, coughing in a detached, irritating way as if she were half asleep.

Presently Daphne heard her father say cheerfully in a more normal tone:

‘Well, I shouldn’t worry to-night if I were you. I’m sure she’ll be better in the morning.’

Daphne turned over on her side. So it was Beulah they’d been talking about! That child had certainly caught cold with a vengeance! Kirstie’s door closed again softly and then the line of light under her own vanished. Her father had blown out the lamp in the living-room and gone to bed. Silence took over the house at last. But for a long while Daphne held herself awake. She was afraid that if she fell asleep those terrible men might close in on her again. Once more greedy fingers would reach for her bracelet . . . No, better to lie awake all night than risk that! She simply wouldn’t get up for breakfast, that was all.

Yet at last, in spite of herself, she fell asleep and dreamed — a most unexciting affair in which she was out in the back yard at home, trying to make a chicken coop out of boards that wouldn’t match, while Gerry kept saying into her ear,

‘That isn’t big enough for Lady Clare!’

‘It is!’ said Daphne positively and added

another board. But as soon as she thought she had it nailed on, it fell off, and she had to keep on hammering . . . and hammering . . .

Daphne opened her eyes. The room was quite light. Outside some one was knocking on the front door. Daphne felt under her pillow for her watch. Half-past six. Rather early for a caller. She listened. Why didn't Frau Weisz answer? — she was always up by this time. The knocking continued.

Daphne finally wrapped a coat around her and ran across the deserted living-room to do the answering herself. With some difficulty, she unbarred the door. The crisp early air, sweet with the spring scent of many little fields, new-turned, was like cold water on her sleepy face.

A young Arab in a fez and soiled white trousers salaamed and held out a folded note. Surprised, Daphne opened it and read:

Come as soon as possible. Mother asking for you.

FATHER

She turned it over; on the back was penciled, 'Kirstie.' Daphne felt a trifle guilty — it had never occurred to her it might be for the Laids.

'Daphne, what is it? Who's there?'

She looked up. Kirstie had not even waited to slip on a coat, but stood in front of her bedroom door, a queer old-fashioned figure in her heavy white nightgown that covered even her toes. She pushed the hair out of her face with a shaking hand, and her eyes, as Daphne gave her the note, were almost black. Was she going to cry? Daphne hoped not; other people's griefs were so embarrassing. Kirstie folded the note again and said steadily:

'Mother is worse. She had an operation, you know, while we were down at Jericho. Your father — told me — last night, — I must go — right away ——'

An operation? So that was why her father had looked queer Friday morning when he brought Dr. Laird in!

'Bulie's asleep' — Kirstie paused, her hand on the door — 'I hate to disturb her. She was so restless all night! Would you mind — if I got dressed in your room, Daphne?'

'No, of course not;' and she could not help adding, because of the look on Kirstie's face, 'Maybe she isn't so bad — your mother, I mean. Maybe she only wants to ask you about your trip ——'

Kirstie glanced at the Big Ben clock on the center table.

‘At twenty minutes of seven?’ she asked, and went to get her clothes.

Daphne wakened her father. It took time — in the course of which she routed out Frau Weisz too who had overslept; but at last he poked his head out, blinking.

‘Um, I was afraid of it last night,’ when Daphne told him. ‘Tell Kirstie I’ll go down with her, and ask Frau Weisz to get us a little breakfast first. Kirstie mustn’t go on an empty stomach.’

Frau Weisz was still moving heavily about her room when Daphne sought her. Her usual smooth face looked queer and mottled. ‘Ach Himmel!’ she sighed after Daphne had told her the news, ‘that is more trouble! The ways of the Herr Gott are not our ways.’

And she departed for the kitchen, her shoulders sagging as much as their plumpness would permit. Daphne went back to Kirstie, fresh depression settling upon her. She had never seen Frau Weisz like this before.

When they had left at last, Daphne went slowly to her empty room. She felt as if she had been up for hours, and it was still barely half-past seven! Slowly she began to finish dressing. Her head felt heavy and her eye-

lids stiff. Maybe she would go back to bed for a while and have her sleep out. She drew her mouth down ruefully. This was the morning she had been going to stay in bed! She examined her wrist. There was still a red welt across it where the bracelet had cut, but it wasn't as angry-looking as yesterday.

'Kir-stee!' Daphne cocked her head, 'KIR-stee!' That was Beulah all right.

She went and stood in the door. Beulah's head, all ruffled with sleep, poked up from the pillow and she blinked heavily at Daphne as if not sure who she was.

'Good-morning, Bulie,' said Daphne, trying to be very bright and cheerful. 'You're an awful lazy-bones! Look at me, I'm all dressed. How's that nose of yours?'

Beulah sniffed. 'Where's Kirstie? I want ——' Suddenly she sat up and began to cough. She huddled over the bedclothes, and coughed and coughed.

Daphne grew alarmed.

'Lie down, Bulie, you'll catch more cold. Shall I get you a drink of water?'

The paroxysm passed. Beulah dropped back on the pillow again and lay quite still.

'Shall I, Bulie?' Daphne took a step or two into the room.

Beulah reached down and pulled the bed-clothes up over her head.

‘I want Kirstie — to — get me a drink of water!’

‘Listen, Bulie,’ — Daphne pulled at the feather comforter to which Beulah only clung more tightly. ‘Kirstie had to go out. She went to see your mother and tell her all about the trip.’ Daphne felt justified in embroidering the facts a little. ‘You were asleep, so she couldn’t say good-bye. And she *said* that you’d be just as good for me as for her. But you don’t seem to be! I was going to give you your breakfast in bed, too.’

Silence. Then the cover moved slightly and a watery blue eye regarded her.

‘That’s a good girl! Now I’ll go get you a nice cold drink of water and see what Frau Weisz has for breakfast. Maybe an egg ——’

‘I don’t want a negg.’

‘And some toast *and* a big cup of chocolate.’ Daphne spoke hastily to forestall another negative.

‘I don’t want hot things,’ objected Beulah, ‘my throat’s too hot now.’

‘But you have to have something!’ cried Daphne in despair. ‘I’ll go see what Frau Weisz can think up.’

But when she reached the kitchen more calamity awaited her. Frau Weisz was incapable of thinking up anything.

'Ach, it is my head,' she wailed. 'Already for six months I have not one "Kopfwch" had! And to-day, behold! Only because I have fear when I learn in the markets there are robbers by the Jericho Road — that already they have killed a native! I have fear! I shake, until you come. And then, when I learn what is happened! — Ach Himmel! Is it a wonder to-day I can do nothing?' She groped for a chair and sat down.

'Goodness,' thought Daphne, 'if she gets sick right here what shall I do?'

'You'd better go lie down awhile,' she suggested. 'Maybe you'll feel better.'

'I think it will not so long last,' groaned Frau Weisz. 'A little sleep and I am often well. But I cannot leave the work for you. If the Kirstie will but soon return.'

'I can manage,' Daphne assured her. 'Hurry and go sleep it off!'

It was ten o'clock when Daphne dropped with a little sigh on one of the hard red divans and pushed the hair out of her eyes. No word of Kirstie nor her father yet, and they had been

gone nearly three hours. What had happened? She shivered and leaned over to put her hand against the little stove. Its black cheek was quite as chilly as she was. She hadn't had time to think of a fire yet this morning.

She had given Beulah some orange juice and many drinks of water and, over protest, a little hot milk and crackers. It hadn't been difficult to keep her in bed, for Beulah was not at all interested in getting up. Then Daphne had washed the dishes, tidied the little kitchen, and made the beds. She had also interviewed the olive-wood man, a vendor in spurious antiques, a woman who was looking for a Jewish orphanage, and the egg man. Now they were all long gone, everything was done, and Time dropped its whole weight on Daphne's hands.

If only her father would come back! Maybe he had forgotten all about her and gone right on to the French monastery, as usual. Yes, that was just what had happened, and Kirstie was staying down there at the hospital with her parents, instead of coming back to help take care of Beulah. But at once Daphne was ashamed of herself. Kirstie wasn't like that. And as for her father, she remembered that it was Sunday, and the library would not be open. What could be keeping them then? She al-

ways thought that when people were sick they couldn't have company very long.

She got up and listened for a moment at the closed door. Quiet inside. Beulah must have dozed off. Daphne was glad. Beulah's cough frightened her sometimes.

She wandered about aimlessly, wishing for something to do, something to read. The books she had she knew from cover to cover. She opened the door into the study and stood irresolute. Then she went in and began to scan the books in the big bookcase — not that she expected to find any to interest her! They were all musty-looking volumes. One, slightly familiar, caught her eyes. She drew it closer. Why, it was that French book her father had wanted her to read; — and she had been going to do it when she got back from Jericho. She'd forgotten all about it. She flapped through the pages diffidently, wondering if she could find the place again. There had been notes in the margin — she found it at last.

'*I, Gilles de Crex, Knight of Normandy and Soldier of the Cross . . .*' She might as well do some now. She didn't want Gerry to be too far ahead of her with French — in May. Spreading the book out before her on the desk, she wondered again why Donald Parrish had

marked this page so particularly. Did her father know yet? She would ask him some day.

She skipped hastily over the part she had read earlier and went on:

'Being come to death at last, do hereby recount by the hand of Brother Mario all that has befallen me since first I swore to free God's Blessed Sepulchre ——'

She lifted her head. Her ears had caught a queer sound from across the hall. It was like sobbing. She hurried over.

'What's the matter, Bulie? What do you want?'

'I want' — Beulah was curled in the middle of the bed, a little bundle of woe — 'I — want — to — see — my — mother!'

Poor Bulie! Daphne patted the pillow. 'But she can't come now, you know. She's — she's sick.'

'I'm sick too,' gulped Beulah. 'An' she said — she was going to be all better in a little while an' that was ages ago——' She coughed and turned over restlessly. Daphne laid a hand against her cheek. How hot she was! If father would only come home she would ask him about getting a doctor.

'I feel' — Beulah spoke with difficulty —

'as if — a — camel — was lying — on my chest an' he — wouldn't get up!'

'Did you ever cough like this before, Bulie?'

'No, but Father did once, and Kirstie made a mus-mustard plaster an' I dropped it on the best rug an' ——'

A mustard plaster! Of course! Daphne went out to the kitchen and began to bustle round. She discovered a package of mustard on the top shelf and took it down, but there wasn't a sign of a recipe on it. She tiptoed to Frau Weisz's door and applied a cautious ear. Distinctly she heard a snore, and tiptoed back. Far be it from her to disturb Frau Weisz if she were 'sleeping it off'!

She stared thoughtfully at the package. If only she had taken that course in First Aid last year, instead of thinking it would take up too much of her spare time! Was that the front door opening? Oh, it was! She raced into the living-room —

'My, but I'm glad ——' She stopped.

Mr. Mawson Manning was in the act of entering, his hand still on the front door.

'Hullo,' he said, 'nobody seemed to be home so I walked in.'

Daphne still stared. 'I thought you were in Jaffa.'

‘Not any more, young lady. Thought I’d stop and see how you were getting along.’ He started toward the guest room.

‘You can’t go in there,’ said Daphne; ‘it’s occupied.’

‘Oh.’ Mr. Manning raised his eyebrows; then, as Beulah coughed, ‘So I hear!’

His tone made Daphne furious, but she bit her lip and said coldly: ‘You never said when you were coming back, and Beulah Laird and her sister are staying with us as long as their mother’s in the hospital. Beulah’s got a bad cold. — There’s a couch in the study,’ she added reluctantly.

‘Of course,’ said Mr. Manning, ‘if some one’s sick, I’m quite willing to put myself out. I’m starting for Beyond Jordan in a day or two, anyway — just stopped off for supplies.’

Daphne went back; she must hurry with that plaster. She got out a saucepan. A few minutes later Mr. Manning appeared in the kitchen.

‘Near tiffin-time?’ he asked. ‘Where’s the Frau?’

‘Got a sick headache.’ Daphne had no time to bother with him. He was certainly good-humored in spite of having to sleep in the

study! He acted as if he'd just had a pleasant surprise. He rubbed his hands together.

'One of her "specials," eh? I know 'em of old. So Miss Daphne is preparing lunch with her own fair hands!'

'No, I'm not,' said Daphne, 'I'm making a mustard plaster.'

'A *mustard* — say, what are you doing, *cooking* it?'

'I was heating it,' she replied with dignity.

'Suffering catfish! It's a good thing I came along when I did! What've you got in there anyhow? Whew!' He stuck his nose into the saucepan and withdrew it hastily.

'Mustard and water,' said Daphne stormily, but her voice wavered.

'My dear young lady' — Mr. Manning assumed charge of the saucepan — 'you've never made a plaster before, have you?'

'No-o.' Daphne would have given much to say, 'Dozens of them!' but she was too honest.

'Saint Lawrence,' went on Mr. Manning, throwing the stuff out, 'would have yelled for his gridiron if they'd happened to clap this on him. Where's the mustard now *and* a piece of brown paper ——' Daphne followed his directions silently. '*And* the flour — thank you!

One to three's the ratio — you'd better remember — *one* mustard to three of flour!

'Where,' asked Daphne, 'did you learn so much, Mr. Manning?'

'Picked it up. The Bedouin think every white man's a doctor. They come round and say they're sick, and I dose them with castor oil and stick a mustard plaster on them. Cures them right away. There, go put that on Beulah-land, and leave it on twenty minutes, no matter if she howls. And then you and I will get lunch. I'd never dare leave you to do it alone after this — you might poison me.'

Oh, how she hated him! Even though she knew that if it hadn't been for him she might have burned Beulah with her good intentions. If only her father would be back before lunch-time!

But he wasn't, and Mr. Manning and she ate alone. Over it, however, Daphne cooled a little, and even condescended to tell him of the hold-up yesterday. To her indignation he made light of it.

'Why didn't you talk up to them? They wouldn't have hurt you for a minute. I know Arabs — all bluff. Why, Parrish used to have a boy working for him — villainous-looking fellow too — but I knew just how to handle

him and he was meek as a lamb. Just show them who's master, that's all, and they respect you.'

Daphne, feeling rather squelched, shifted to other topics, the seller of fake antiques for one thing. Mr. Manning said he knew of Ibrahim.

'Funny fellow — always knew everybody's business, and his own too. I'll have to give him another order for some nice new *antikas* to send home to my friends. They'll never know the difference. Ibrahim's the best faker in the East; boasts he could even fool the British Museum ——' He broke off suddenly, 'By the way, who'd been reading that book on the Crusades?'

'I was.' Daphne looked surprised. She remembered that she had left the book open on the desk, and for some reason wished she had put it back.

'Perhaps you don't know that that's too valuable a collection to be dropped round carelessly. I noticed before one was missing ——'

'No, it wasn't,' Daphne flashed. 'My father wanted that Crusader book in his own room, so he could read it when he liked. I guess he ——'

'No offense meant.' Mr. Manning rose,

grinning at her indignation. 'Isn't that your friend Beulah calling?'

Beulah was always wanting water, water. Daphne felt her cheeks anxiously. They were so hot, and her cough was still awful in spite of the plaster.

'Kirstie!' Beulah turned fretfully away from Daphne's soothing hands, 'I want Kirstie, I want my mother.'

And still there was no Kirstie and no Professor and no word of any kind. . . .

'Is that a kitty in the corner, Daffy?'

A tingle ran up Daphne's spine. There was nothing but shadow in the corner.

'No, your kitty isn't there, Bulie dear!' She must send for a doctor right away. And again she realized it was well that Mr. Manning had turned up. She ran across and knocked on the study door.

'Yes?' He sounded annoyed, but she didn't care.

'Please,' she said, 'won't you go for a doctor? Beulah's acting so funny ——'

He opened the door reluctantly, the book in his hands. 'Oh, she's all right — kids always make a fuss over every little pain!'

'But she's seeing things' — Daphne was wringing her hands — 'things that aren't

there. If I knew a doctor I'd go and you could stay with her.'

'Oh, I'll go if you insist,' said Mr. Manning. 'I know a doctor that lives near. He's a Syrian, but he's all right.'

He came out soon, his hat mashed down on his stiff curls, and paused, his hand on the doorknob. 'There's a boy coming,' he announced, 'and a dog.'

'Vail!' Daphne's face lighted. It would be good to have some one to talk to besides this terrible man!

Vail was standing on the steps with Lady Clare beside him, her front feet on the veranda, her head raised, sniffing thoughtfully at Mr. Manning. 'I'm taking Lady Clare out for a walk' — Vail turned to Daphne, 'Would you come along?'

'Oh, I'd love to, but I can't. Beulah's ——'

'In that case,' interposed Mr. Manning hastily, 'maybe your friend will go for the doctor. Dr. Aziz — do you know him?' He gave Vail directions and promptly disappeared into the study again, closing the door with a relieved slam.

'What's up, anyway?' Vail looked after him in astonishment and she explained the state of things as hastily as possible.

‘As if yesterday wasn’t enough!’ she wailed.

‘Disagreeable duffer,’ said Vail, and — ‘Poor Lairds!’ He hesitated and then burst out, ‘I say, I think you’re a brick to stand by like this. I hope they come home soon and let you off. We could go for a walk later, if ——’

‘Beulah’s calling me’ — Daphne was pleased at his frank approval. ‘Wait a second till I see what she wants.’

Beulah was half sitting up. ‘I heard somebody. Is it Kirstie?’

‘No, dear, it’s only Vail and Lady Clare ——’

‘I want to see Lady Clare! He said I might pat her.’ Beulah brightened.

‘Some other time, Bulie, when you’re all well ——’

The glow died. ‘No, I want her now, Daphne!’

‘I say,’ Vail called in from outside, ‘I’ll leave Lady here while I go for the doctor, if you like. She’ll behave properly, won’t you, old girl?’ He handed the leash to Daphne, who had come out to him again. ‘Tell her to lie down and she’ll do it.’

Lady Clare gave him a quick soft look and then walked in beside Daphne, who earnestly hoped she wouldn’t bark. Indoors it would be so deafening.

'Here she is, Bulie. Now don't get up!'

Beulah's small face shone with eagerness. She turned on her side and stretched out a hand, patting the bedside coaxingly. 'O-oo! Isn't she wonderful, Daffy? Come here to me, Lady! Come here.'

Lady Clare obeyed. She dropped her great head on the little hot hand and stood very still, gazing upon the contented face on the pillow with her soft remote eyes.

At last, at last Dr. Pollack came! Daphne, gasping, flew to meet him.

'Oh, Daddy! Daddy! Where have you been? I've needed you so!' She took his arm and looked up into his face, which was tired and serious and — something else. Daphne's heart seemed to stand still. 'What is it? Is their mother so terribly ill?'

Dr. Pollack nodded. 'She's still living, ducky, but they couldn't tell yet — they weren't sure. You got my note all right?'

'No, Father, not a thing, all day! And Beulah's been so sick ——'

'I might have known that fellow wouldn't bring it.' He looked exasperated. 'It's a good thing I came, then. Kirstie was worried about you and Beulah, but I told her you'd get along all right. I wanted her to come back too, but

she wouldn't. They had to operate again, Daphne. There were complications, and it was the only hope. She isn't out of ether yet. Now come into my room and tell me about Beulah.'

Daphne did. She told him also about Manning, still cloistered in the study. Her father chuckled.

'So the whale didn't get him after all!'

A few minutes later Vail returned with the doctor, a dark, competent little man, who spoke careful English.

'Bronchitis,' he told them. 'A bad case, but it will not be pneumonia. The congestion is broken — the plaster did that. You give her another to-night. And I leave some medicine. In the morning I come to see.'

'She's ever so much quieter.' Daphne sighed her relief. 'It was funny, but the minute Lady came she seemed better.'

'I think I ought to go back to the hospital, daughter, and reassure Kirstie. You don't mind, do you?' Dr. Pollack said when the doctor had gone.

'No-o, of course not.' But she would so love that walk with Vail, who was still lingering outside. There was no help for it, however, and Vail took himself off presently with Lady Clare, at whose departure Beulah did not

grieve, for she had fallen into a profound sleep.

Daphne lay down on the hard divan beside the little stove which had now a rosy spot on each cheek. Out in the kitchen Frau Weisz moved carefully, her headache slept off at last. Mr. Manning went downtown to get his supplies.

The day darkened into night and still Daphne lay, waiting, waiting. It was so long, this waiting business! Waiting, for some one to get well — or not get well. Which would it be? And would Kirstie feel very bad if she lost her mother now — after having her for so long? What would it be like to know your mother and then lose her? Daphne did not know; she had been two months old when hers died. To lose her father, now — that of course would be different. She couldn't imagine the red brick house back in Alden without her father in it — nor life at all for that matter — without the security of his presence somewhere to fall back on. It was too terrible — too impossible. Was that the way Kirstie would feel? . . .

A click of the gate and feet outside. A knock, and the door thrown open. Her father's cheerful 'Here we are, ducky!' and behind his long, stooping figure, Kirstie's slim, upright one.

'Oh, Kirstie!' Daphne dared not ask the

question. Instead she said, 'Come on into my room. Beulah's lots better, but she's asleep again.'

Kirstie smiled and followed her lead, but she stood still in the middle of the bedroom as if she did not know what to do next.

'Is — is ——' Daphne stumbled. 'Kirstie, your mother ——'

'Oh, Daphne, she's going to be all right now! They say she'll be well, really well! She — spoke — to me, after she came out — of ether.' And all at once Kirstie dropped on a rug and leaning her head against the bed began to cry.

'Don't!' Daphne knelt beside her and hugged her tight. 'There's nothing to cry for, Kirstie, if she's all right.'

'I know' — the words came in gusts — 'but I — can't — help it! I'm so — tired! It was such — a long — day!'

At last she gulped and felt for her handkerchief. 'I'm through now,' she whispered. 'And I'm sorry about you — about Beulah being so much care. How did you ever manage?'

'Fine!' Daphne scrambled to her feet. 'I learned a lot, too!' How mean and paltry her trials seemed compared to Kirstie's day! 'And I'm so glad everything's turned out all right! Hurry up and wash your eyes. It's almost time to eat.'

CHAPTER VII

MR. MANNING SHOWS HIS HAND

'I, Gilles de Crex, Knight of Normandy and Soldier of the Cross . . . do hereby recount . . . all that has befallen me since first I swore to free God's Blessed Sepulchre . . .'

The words wove themselves like a fine silver thread in and out of Daphne's dreams and drew her back the next morning in spite of herself, after Mr. Manning had gone downtown and left the study conveniently vacant. What sort of adventures had this free-lance Crusader that, dying, he should dictate them to a gray brother of Saint Francis? She wanted to find out. And she resolved not to say anything to her father until she could surprise him with the whole translation, perfectly done.

The 'Reliques of the Crusades' was not on the desk where she had left it, but after some searching she discovered it, wedged in behind a row of books in the bookcase. She yanked it out indignantly. And Mr. Manning had reproved her for not leaving that book where it belonged! When Kirstie called presently to ask

her to walk down to the hospital, she slipped the volume back into its proper space on the shelf, as a silent hint for Mr. Manning to do the same thing.

In the quiet days that followed, Daphne had plenty of time to pore over the old diary, for Beulah, while she improved rapidly, was still in the house and Kirstie divided most of her time between entertaining her sister, who proved an exacting convalescent, and slipping off to the hospital to see her mother. For a while Vail appeared daily until, when his father returned, they moved down to Ain Karim for a time, where Lady Clare would stay while Vail went off with the Colonel on another Arab excursion. Daphne saw them go with regret. She would miss Vail for all his airs. Then one day her father announced that he too was going away to visit some recent excavations.

‘But I thought you were busy with that old manuscript!’ Daphne felt quite low for a moment.

‘I would be if I could only find it. You see that library was never catalogued after the War. I only hope it wasn’t lost in the confusion! I won’t know certainly until Père Clément, who’s in charge, gets back from Carmel. So meanwhile I thought I might as well go

down to Gaza, since you have the girls to keep you company.' He pinched her sober cheek — 'Not to mention Mr. Manning!'

But the day before his departure, Mr. Manning departed for Amman. 'Why, I just met him this noon at the monastery!' Dr. Pollack was astonished.

'What was he doing at a monastery?' Daphne stared.

'My dear, I didn't ask. Maybe he's going to be a monk.'

'Huh, fat chance!' She gave him a withering look.

He rode away the next morning and when, a few days later, Daphne went for the 'Reliques of the Crusades' she found it gone. Her father must have taken it with him, not knowing that she was interested in it. She was disappointed, for she had expected to finish it before he got back. Well, it would have to wait.

He came in late one March evening, tired and dusty and the next morning he tapped on Daphne's bedroom door. 'Ducky, do you have the Crusader book in there? It isn't in its place ——'

'Why, no' — she stared at him, comb in hand — 'I thought you took it with you — it's been gone ever since you left. I — I looked ——'

‘Are you sure you didn’t put it somewhere? You’re kind of forgetful, you know, my daughter.’ He frowned.

‘Positively! I always put it back carefully because ——’ She stopped, ‘Do you know, I bet Mr. Manning’s got that book; I know he was reading it.’ She sniffed. ‘He was so afraid *I’d* do something to it and here he’s gone and taken it among all those filthy, dirty natives.’

‘Well,’ said the Professor after an exasperated pause, ‘I wish he’d consult me first when he wants to borrow anything! Here’s Père Clément back and I going there first thing with the book to see if that would help identify the manuscript, and now — goodness knows when Manning will ever turn up again. Not for a long time now we want him, I’m sure!’

‘Dad!’ Daphne was unusually thoughtful through breakfast. She followed him to the study afterwards. ‘I — I did quite a lot of that translation before it disappeared. I wanted to surprise you with it when you came back. I think I can still remember the first part pretty nearly word for word — I guess I did it so hard it stuck — and if that would help any ——’

‘Help? I should say it would!’ He beamed at her. ‘Unfortunately I never thought of

memorizing it — never expected it would be necessary.'

By noon she had it done, and a few hours later she was sitting on a mildewed divan in the reception room of the French monastery, amusing herself by repeating it while she waited for her father to return from those precincts where women were not admitted.

'So we did hide what gold and silver we had got from the Infidel, together with Reliques of the Saints among which was an ancient chalice as I have already mentioned, in certain convenient places against our return to France. . . . But Saladin coming upon us suddenly we fled, each man saving what he could in his haste . . .'

She'd been so interested in her achievement that she had begged her father to take her along when he went to see Père Clément. But an hour of waiting in this chill, inhospitable room had taken the edge off her new enthusiasm. Besides, Beulah and Kirstie, who were to meet them at the Colony store inside the Jaffa Gate, would wonder what had happened.

Daphne wiggled her foot which showed signs of going to sleep and turned her thoughts from knights to the purchases she intended to make. May wasn't so far off now — less than two

months, and whatever she wanted to take home she ought to be buying or before she knew it the time would be gone and she would be sailing joyously for Italy. She hoped her father would have found what he was after before then, though of course he could write her about it if need be. This quickened curiosity of hers needn't interfere with her other plans. Not at all!

And speaking of letters there hadn't been any foreign mail for ages. In her last Gerry had hinted at a perfectly heavenly plan for the summer. When she knew it in detail Daphne would have something definite to confront her father with. She had only mentioned the subject once or twice so far; somehow she never seemed to find the psychological moment, and always he had answered vaguely, 'We'll see when the time comes.' It would come, surely, when Gerry wrote just where Daphne was to meet them. Then, thought Daphne, if her father still hesitated, she would muss his hair and coo sweetly into his flattered ear. Oh, she knew his little ways! He liked to be persuaded a bit.

The bell at the monastery door jangled across her thoughts. A brother went to answer it.

'Good-day,' she heard a distinctly American voice, 'Père Clément in?'

Daphne nearly slid off the divan in surprise. It was Mr. Manning! So he had come back — ahead of time as usual. She sat up straight, expecting to see his curly head appear in the doorway, but instead she heard him say, 'Why, there he is now going down the hall.'

There was a pause, punctuated by the slow scuffle of sandaled feet. Then a strange voice asked, 'What can I do for you, Monsieur?' They stood outside in the hall. Daphne could not help hearing their conversation.

'Our library is not open to the public, Monsieur, but if you have a little word of introduction; you are with Monsieur Pollack of the American University? Bien! A card from him, then! Good-day, Monsieur.'

'But Père Clément ——!' Mr. Manning's protest was cut short by the creak of the great door. Daphne was sure she heard a chuckle as Père Clément went away.

She sat on, almost forgetting the passage of time in her wonderings. What manuscript could Mr. Manning be after? — the one her father was looking for by any chance? And had he brought back the book which he had borrowed? And why had Père Clément sent him

away to get a card of introduction, when he knew very well her father was right there in the monastery?

The sound of feet coming rapidly down the stone corridor roused her, and she rose as her father entered with a Franciscan monk.

‘Daphne, this is Père Clément. I’ve told him how well you remembered that passage.’

‘I recognize it at once, Mademoiselle.’ He tucked his hands up his wide brown sleeves. Daphne was sure she saw a twinkle in the bright blue eyes that regarded her. Had he known she was in there all the time?

‘Père Clément,’ explained her father, ‘has been reëstablishing a monastery in Mount Carmel that was ruined in the War.’

‘They left nothing,’ declared the monk cheerfully, ‘but the walls — those Turks! I had to begin at the beginning. A big business, but it is finished, and I am glad to be here to aid you, Monsieur le Professeur. I knew and admired your friend Doctor Parrish. Ah, but he was a scholar! I believe he thought in Hebrew as often as English; and as for Greek —’

‘In five minutes,’ declared the Professor to Daphne, ‘Père Clément had the manuscript I wanted! And I had hunted for weeks!’

‘It is only that I have a good memory,’

averred Père Clément modestly, 'Were it not for that it would be impossible since the War to find anything! Nor to call by name those whom I have not seen in years! Mademoiselle, who also has so good a memory, agrees, is it not so?' Daphne flushed. She knew what he meant! 'By the by, Monsieur le Professeur, that Mis-ter Manning whom you say has borrowed the book — he was here not many minutes ago.' His bright eyes were still on Daphne. 'He would consult our library. When I ask him for — how is it you say in English? — his credentials, he says he is with you. "Bien," I reply to him, "then you may bring me one little word of introduction from that Professeur Pollack." He went away very angry, I think.'

'You mean, he was here — just now?' The Professor's jaw dropped. 'Why, I didn't know he was around. This is the second time he's been here too! I never suspected this sort of thing would interest him!'

'If I were you, my friend,' Père Clément shrugged, 'I would not trust that man too far. He is very vain! And vanity is like all bad habits; it must be indulged. He would not mind to take an honor from under your hands, or so I would think. I do not believe Monsieur

Parrish trusted him at the last, though for that matter he trusted no one. "I have a theory," he would say, "and it may come to nothing, so why make of myself a laughter?"

'Eh, bien, it came to his death, that theory — was that nothing? The more I think of it, the more I feel that Monsieur Parrish succeeded beyond his hopes! Not for nothing did the dervishes at the mosque howl for his death — though, of course, I never believed that wild talk of Solomon's treasure. But consider — no matter what he thought to find beneath the temple area, would not mere rumor that he was there have been as fire to gunpowder among those mad Moslems? No, do not be discouraged, Monsieur le Professeur! But we will talk more of this another time, for I see your daughter grows impatient.' And he dismissed them with a wave of his graceful hands.

'Père Clément is one of the world's greatest scholars,' said Dr. Pollack as they headed for the Jaffa Gate. 'I wonder if Manning is after that same manuscript. For, of course, if he's been poring over that book ——'

'I heard them talking,' gasped Daphne excitedly 'out in the hall. Père Clément never let on you were anywhere near! I'm sure he suspects Mr. Manning of something! Daddy, did

you find out where Gilles de Crex hid that stuff?’

Her father laughed. ‘Not yet, ducky, give me time! That manuscript’s written in mediæval Latin. But here comes Beulah to meet us.’ For by this time they had neared the great gate.

Beulah, squeezing past a stately camel train that followed in single file behind a diminutive donkey, ran toward them holding out a letter. Daphne’s heart gave a thump. Gerry’s! But when she took it, she saw it wore a Palestine stamp and the writing was unfamiliar.

‘There wasn’t any foreign mail,’ announced Beulah, skipping to keep up with them, until three women of Ramallah, starting homeward, their babies on their hips, turned to stare after her in profound astonishment. ‘You’re awful late,’ she added.

‘I know’ — Daphne worked her finger under the flap of the envelope — ‘but it wasn’t my fault, Bulie. Did they say when the foreign mail would be in?’

‘They didn’t know. There was a notice up about its being late on account of storms ——’

‘Oh! Well — *who* do you think *this* is from?’

‘Who?’ asked the Professor, and ‘Who?’ demanded Beulah, taking hold of Daphne’s arm

and craning her neck not very politely to see for herself.

‘*Vail!*’ Daphne’s glance ran down the page. ‘Oh, won’t that be fun?’

‘What, Daffy?’ Beulah teetered with impatience. ‘Aw, tell me, please!’

The three of them had halted directly inside the gate and the stream of traffic parted and flowed placidly around them as if they had been only a rock in the bed of it.

‘They’ve got the cutest little donkey named Sammy, all gray but one foot, which is quite black. . .’ Daphne turned the page over . . . ‘And they’ve been away all this time, and his father brought back a whole new set of native clothes, Vail says. Father, we can go, can’t we?’

‘Where? When?’

‘Why — I told you — to Ain Karim — for the day — on Thursday!’

‘Umph! I don’t believe I could take the whole day, ducky, just now, but we might for the afternoon, if you like. Let’s talk it over later; I see Kirstie looking for us now.’

They spent the rest of the afternoon pottering around the shops and then hurried up the Mount of Olives for the sunset. It was growing dark as they entered their own lane again. A

jaunty figure was coming down it. Daphne scowled. She had forgotten all about Mr. Manning!

‘Good-evening!’ He stopped. ‘I’d about given you up. No, can’t stay — going down to Hebron to-night. I’d like a word with you, Professor.’

Kirstie and Beulah, taking the hint, went on, but Daphne hung back, and her father did not dismiss her. Mr. Manning’s voice purred through the dusk. ‘When I return, I may want to glance over some old manuscripts in the French monastery — just to keep in practice, you know. Thought you might like to give me a card of introduction, since you seem to be here in Parrish’s place ——’

Daphne slipped her arm through her father’s and gave it a squeeze. Had he forgotten Père Clément’s warning? The Professor cleared his throat and rubbed his left ear — a sure sign he was uneasy. At last he said slowly:

‘I’m not — in a position — Mr. Manning —— If you were here officially from a University, it would be different, but as it is, I can’t feel that my authority extends ——’

‘Oh, indeed!’ The dusk blurred Mr. Manning’s face. There was a pause; then abruptly, ‘Of course, it isn’t necessary, not necessary at

all! I only wanted to do the courteous thing. Very sorry to have troubled you!’

He slapped his hat down on his curls and started off, but Dr. Pollack stopped him, ‘Just a minute, Manning. There’s a book of Parrish’s missing — I wonder if you by any chance have it ——’

‘I did’ — sulkily — ‘but I’ve returned it. Found it very dull reading, myself.’

‘Why didn’t you say you suspected him?’ cried Daphne after he was gone. ‘Why didn’t you tell him he should stop.’

‘My dear,’ said her father, holding her arm close with his, ‘when you’ve lived a while longer you’ll know that it isn’t worth arguing with people like that. You only get angry and reduce yourself to their level. And, besides, what can I tell him? I haven’t found anything myself! I haven’t discovered a single definite clue to the secret Don Parrish took to his grave. I only think it has to do with that Crusader cache, but I’m not even sure of that, though Mr. Manning’s sudden interest in manuscripts has made me suspect I’m on the right track.’

Daphne found herself trembling when she threw off her hat and coat in her own room. She had never known her father to talk like

that before — nor look so stooped and tired. A lump rose in her throat and she swallowed hard.

‘Oh, he must find it! He *must!*’ she whispered fiercely, ‘Before that Mr. Manning has a chance to get ahead of him, for I know, I *know* that’s what he’s trying to do!’

CHAPTER VIII

TALE OF A DONKEY WITH TWO DARK FEET

SALIM, the shepherd boy — he who was called Peace — sat on his bare heels within the thin shadow of a rock, and, gazing down upon the roofs and minarets of Ain Karim, meditated upon the strangeness of Fate. Yet, being a true Arab for all his twelve years, he wasted no time in abusing it. If Ibrahim Wahabby's young donkey fell stupidly into an abandoned well and broke its neck, while he — Salim — was busy fashioning a new sling, was that any fault of *his*? No, assuredly it was Kismet, and by the Will of Allah!

This much he accepted philosophically. Still, it *was* permitted to one to question how, having lost the donkey, was one to escape the beating that would surely follow? How, indeed? Salim frowned and shifted his weight from his heels to his hard toes. He had no desire to come to blows with so powerful a man as Ibrahim, for Ibrahim's wrath would not end in words and a good beating. He would also remove from Salim's charge his two milk-goats

and their kids, and likewise his three fat-tailed sheep. And at the thought, Salim, if he had been a woman, would have thrown dust upon his head and wailed.

Because of a donkey — a little donkey — he was to be made a shame in the eyes of all Ain Karim! His mother; — and, remembering his mother, his woe increased. For the sake of his mother and his sister, who was called Light, he had bargained to shepherd Ibrahim Wahabby's animals with his own little flock. For Ibrahim Wahabby was far too learned a man to waste his talents on the herding of sheep of which he kept no more than were necessary to supply the household with milk, a little wool, and a dinner at Ramadan.

With Ibrahim's animals withdrawn, where was Salim to procure the price of bread and cheese for his mother, and for Munireh, his little sister?

Salim settled more firmly on his hunkers and stared at his flock, from whose midst the long ears of that most depraved of little donkeys were so conspicuously missing.

He sat so long motionless that the kids of the white goat Fatima, who were appallingly near-sighted, mistook him for a new kind of shrub and nibbled at his sleeve.

‘Ya! Imshi!’

The shrub came to life suddenly and the kids jumped aside with astonished bleats. But with his arm still uplifted for a blow Salim paused, and then let it drop again groundward till his fingers found and pulled a little tuft of cyclamen sheltering beneath the rock. He held it out to the kids.

‘Come and eat, little silly ones!’ he soothed them. ‘For unless Allah sharpens my wits exceedingly this is the last time you will take food from my hands!’ And with that he became so sorry for himself that tears rose to his eyes.

The kids accepted his invitation skittishly, and advanced on stiff legs to reach out soft nervous lips for the glossy leaves and mauve flowers. When they had eaten them all, they asked for more. But Salim saw none within reach of his hand. There was only the tiny cavity from which he had grubbed the first clump. In it a bit of brightness caught his eye. It was a fragment of iridescent glass. He picked it up, staring at it a minute and then flung it away from him so violently that the kids were frightened and skipped back to their mother.

Here was a fresh woe! Never, never again would Ibrahim want the things he found on

stony hillsides where he led his flock! Glass, like the sliver he had just thrown away! Glass curved in the shape of bottles or bowls and of the color of many rainbows! Sometimes there were coins. And once, he had unearthed on one of his summer excursions in search of green pastures, a small green statue of a woman holding a child in her arms. At sight of it, Ibrahim's face had set like a mask, and Salim knew he was pleased. Sometime later, Ibrahim had summoned him and displayed three more statues, exactly like it, except that these were new and shiny and more attractive. He was amazed at Ibrahim's command.

'Bury them deep in the earth! And mark well the place where thou hast hidden them, for later I shall bid thee dig them up again, after which perhaps I shall give thee a piastre for thy pains.' And, as Salim, to whom every piastre was welcome, promptly thrust the three statuettes into the open front of his dress, Ibrahim dropped his head until his eyes were on a level with the boy's. 'Say no word of this to any one,' he said, 'or thou shalt receive no piastre, but only a very large beating on the soles of thy feet!'

Salim, impressed, had buried the figures, kept his mouth shut, and in due time had gone home

with a piastre tucked carefully in his cheek. Since then, for similar commissions faithfully performed, he had added others to the family hoard. And what or why was all this burying and resurrecting he did not ask. It was not his affair.

Now, alas and alas, this too would be no more! And all because of an infant ass, least of the least of creatures! So Salim continued to sit on his despairing heels in the thin strip of shade that shrank and shrank as the March sun wheeled into the center of the brilliant sky.

At last it was noon, a time when all things slept.

The sheep lay down where they ate and were so still that they became one with the gray stones that strewed the hillside. The goats dozed, their shaggy backs pressed against the coolness of a great rock. A busy hill wind dropped off suddenly in its tracks and all the almond and mish-mish trees about Ain Karim straightened up in relief, knowing they might keep their dainty blossoms a little longer. Even the hills that lifted their gray heads toward Bethlehem swam dreamily in noon haze. But Salim stared on, miserably, seeing nothing.

‘Salim! Salim! See, I have brought thee something to eat.’

Munireh ran up the hill toward him, her bare feet white with the dust of the highway. Her dirty blue slip clung to her thin body. It was her only garment. At night, and on the still frosted mornings, it was not enough. But she wore a little gold ring in her snub nose, and that, so far as she was concerned, made up for much.

When she reached her brother, she held out to him a thin disk of gray bubbly bread wrapped like a piece of paper about a wedge of white goat's cheese.

'It has been freshly baked,' she explained, 'and our mother has commanded me, "Take it to thy brother on the hill, for it is very good and will please an appetite that grows keen in the air."'

Salim groaned and thrust the offering savagely away.

'Eat it thyself! I have no appetite today.'

Munireh squatted down cross-legged beside him, and peeped up at her brother sideways through a tangled mat of hair. Then she tore off a spongy piece of bread, opened it into a kind of pocket and inserting some of the cheese, began to munch it tranquilly. Meanwhile, her bright eyes moved along the hillside and over

the backs of the sleeping flock. She knew every member of it as well as her brother did.

So, presently she asked him, 'Where is the donkey, Salim?'

Salim, who in spite of himself had been reaching out a surreptitious hand for the lunch, withdrew it quickly and turned his shoulder.

'What hast thou done with the donkey?' persisted Munireh.

'I?' shouted Salim very loudly. 'Am I a fool that I should do anything with Ibrahim's donkey? That's a girl's question!'

And he continued to make similar remarks until Munireh broke in, tranquilly, 'Tell me — how then did the donkey die?'

'Die? Have I said it was dead?' Salim stared at her.

'It was not necessary,' she told him shrugging. 'If it were only lost, you would be hunting for it; if it were stolen, you would be running back to the town, crying, "Thief! Thief!" You do neither of these things, and you talk also to no purpose in a very loud voice. Therefore, I perceive that the donkey is dead.'

Salim grunted, but he eyed his sister with a certain respect.

'Yes,' he agreed wretchedly. 'Ibrahim Wa-

habby's donkey is dead, and I — I might better be dead also!'

And then, as if the little trickle of confession had weakened the dam of his pride, the whole story burst through in a torrent of laments.

'And to-night — to-night he will beat me,' he concluded, 'and afterwards we shall starve, I and thou and our mother!' And appalled by the picture, he suddenly grabbed up the bread and tore off piece after piece with his teeth, swallowing each mouthful whole, as if he were already starving.

'But' — Munireh gathered the crumbs from the ground and ate them — 'I have no wish to starve — more than at present. Let us find some other way out of the difficulty.'

'Some other way! Yes, of course! Bid Allah restore the donkey alive and whole! Oh, yes, you are very clever! So clever we will never be able to find you a husband, were you the richest maid in the village!'

But Munireh was not disturbed by his sarcasm. 'I shall not marry, anyway. I shall go to Jerusalem to the school where one is taught to make lace for which the Americans pay much good money. I shall be able to send my mother more piastres than thou, who art so clever that thou canst only tend sheep!'

Salim salaamed elaborately, 'And when, O Sitt, is all this marvel to take place?'

'Inshallah!' she answered. 'When God wills. — But still I think I shall have something to say in His "willing"! As to the donkey — assuredly one cannot restore life to the dead, but one might put a living donkey in its place!'

'More foolishness,' grumbled Salim. 'Have *I* money to buy a donkey? And if I could, where should I find one so like that Ibrahim would not at once detect the difference?'

'I will tell you,' said Munireh, leaning closer, and a gray lizard slithered away at her moving. 'In the field that belongs to the English Shereef is a little donkey. It is the very size, and also its left forefoot is dark.'

'Ibrahim's donkey had two dark forefeet,' said Salim. 'And a spot here.' He pointed between his eyes.

'Why wast thou not born a girl?' cried his sister. 'Thou art so stupid! Will not a little charcoal well rubbed in make the other foot dark, too, and the whole face, if necessary?' She pointed to the pile of charred wood and the unused store of sticks which every shepherd provides himself with against the chill of the early morning.

'And what shall I do, O clever woman?' de-

manded her brother. 'Go to the Shereef and say, "I have allowed Ibrahim Wahabby's donkey to become dead. Now, therefore, give me thine in place of it!" Or' — Salim was enraptured by the sound of his own eloquence — 'shall I go secretly and lead the donkey away? How far do you think I shall have led him before the Shereef and his son and his servant are upon me, crying, "Thief! Thief!" And then I shall be thrown into jail as well as beaten!'

'Words!' said Munireh. 'Listen again, Salim. If a gate is left open will not a donkey stray, especially if — if urged a little from behind?' She touched the sling that hung suspended from his sash. 'And afterwards — if thou come upon it, is it for *thee* to name its master? And after it has been given another dark foot and a dark spot between the eyes, even the English Shereef cannot swear that it is his donkey, which boasted only one dark foot!'

'Ha-aah!' And Salim sprang to his feet and shouted his exultation so loudly that a car headed for Ain Karim on the distant highway suddenly sprouted three amazed heads from the back seat.

Munireh, too resourceful to let slip any opportunity, darted away in pursuit.

‘Baksheesh! Baksheesh!’ she shrilled, skirts flying, both dirty hands outstretched toward the dust of the departing Ford. But it did not slow up, and presently she came back, not in the least disgruntled over the vain pursuit.

But Salim, alone, had had time to think up another objection. ‘It is all very well, thy plan,’ he conceded her grudgingly, ‘*after* the gate is left open. But how is *that* to be accomplished?’

‘That!’ retorted Munireh, ‘is for thee to find out! I have told thee enough.’ There followed a pause.

‘I will do it! By the beard of the Prophet, I will do it!’ Salim’s black eyes suddenly blazed. ‘I shall get the donkey and avoid a beating and thou and our mother will not starve — and all because there is a man in the family!’ He waved a hand toward his flock. ‘Watch them well until I return. Here is my rod and staff.’ And he strode off, singing as he went.

Once he stopped and picked a great red anemone for his *agal* — those two ropes of goat’s hair that held his torn *kuffieh* in place upon his head. So might David the shepherd boy have done when he started out to meet Goliath among these very hills. Later he

stooped again and, like David also, selected some smooth stones and put them in his *jrab*, the goatskin pouch which hung across his shoulders. There they clinked against the flint and steel by which he fired his little pile of wood on winter mornings. Once, to test his skill, he took out his sling and aimed a pebble at a great black-and-gray crow. The bird gave a startled croak and flapped away. Salim burst into louder song.

But when he neared the white garden wall surrounding the square house which all Ain Karim knew belonged to the Shereef Al'an, he fell silent and moved more warily. Presently he passed an iron gate through which he could peep into the garden beyond. It appeared that there were guests and in consequence much rushing to and fro. Salim flattened himself in the shadow by the gate and watched them. He had never seen so many English at close quarters before. There was the Shereef and his son and another Shereef and three young English *sittat*. There was also a dog as large as the deceased donkey had been. Salim shuddered. He had a Moslem's proper loathing of a dog, and there was so much of this one to be loathed.

Suddenly, the younger people jumped up

and went, chattering like magpies in a field of corn, toward the rear of the house. The big dog also wished to follow, but was driven back. Salim slipped along the garden wall until it stopped and a row of cactus appeared in its stead. He peeped between two flat spiny leaves and saw a small field into which led a wooden gate in the opposite side; *and*, yes, by the grace of Allah, there was the donkey, the very image of the one that was dead! — But how was he to get the gate open unseen?

As he considered, he heard voices. The four young people, of whom one was the Shereef's son, appeared, opened the little gate, and stepped inside. The donkey, cropping peacefully at the young grass, raised his head with a whoof of surprise. The young Shereef pursed his lips and blew through them and at once the little donkey pointed his ears and trotted nearer. Squeals of delight from the three young lady shereefs. The smallest of them began to dance upon her toes until held forcibly down by a larger one.

'Sam-mee! Sam-mee!' they chorused. The young Shereef held out his hand and spoke imperatively.

Salim, motionless among the cactus spines, felt his eyes bulge. The donkey wagged his

ears stupidly. Again the young Shereef spoke, holding low the empty palm of his hand. The donkey stamped his forefoot and snorted. The young Shereef wiggled his fingers. And then, marvel of marvels, the little donkey lifted his right hoof and the Shereef shook it up and down! Salim began to wonder whether it were not better to take a beating after all than to risk unknown evils by stealing an animal so clearly possessed of the devil! But before he had decided, something happened that spurred him to action.

Beyond the garden wall a voice called. The four lifted their heads and listened. It called again and they departed hastily, speaking over their shoulders to the Smallest One who was lingering to pat the devil-donkey between his ears. Then they all disappeared together. *But the gate remained wide open and forgotten.*

Devil or no devil, one could not overlook so clear an indication of the favor of Heaven. Salim stealthily drew a stone from his pouch and slipped it into the hollow of his sling. The donkey was cropping the grass again, its head near the open gate. Salim drew back a little. He whirled the sling by its long strings, once, twice, three times, expertly, and the stone shot humming toward its mark. Salim watched unbreathing.

It happened not quite as he had planned it. The cactus interfered with his aim. The stone grazed the donkey's rear, was deflected and spatted against the neighboring garden wall.

From beyond came a flurry of barks, but Salim did not wait to hear, for the startled donkey had snorted, jumped, and, being already headed for the open gate, trotted through it. Salim, slipping another stone into his sling, darted along the cactus hedge until he saw his quarry hesitating not far ahead of him. With another well-placed shot he turned it toward the open hill, where it was soon out of sight of the house. Then Salim, running swiftly, caught up with it, and after a little dodging threw his arm around its shaggy neck and turned its nose in the direction of his waiting sister.

Munireh, crouched beside a little pile of blackened sticks, rose at his approach.

‘Is it not as I said?’

Salim grumbled, ‘I think he has a devil, that donkey! Had I been less clever I should not have succeeded at all ——’

‘Hold him quiet!’ interrupted Munireh, who was already rubbing the charcoal on the one gray ankle. ‘A-ah! Behold! Is not this Ibrahim’s donkey returned to life?’ And she

made a black smudge between its eyes and sat back on her heels to admire the effect. 'Why dost thou not answer, Salim? Art thou not yet content?'

'I — I am afraid,' confessed Salim uneasily. 'My heart is a stone in my breast. The donkey is indeed a brother of the one that is dead and yet — I am afraid ——'

'That is foolish,' said Munireh, 'for even the Shereef knows that his donkey had only one dark foot while this — has two!'

'I shall take it back at once to the house of Ibrahim.' Salim was suddenly determined, and with the decision his heart grew a little lighter. If the donkey were safe inside its master's walls, what would there be to fear? 'I will say, if he asks me, that I thought the donkey was ill — or possessed with a devil. Give me my rod that I may drive him more easily, and if the Shereef should come seeking him ——'

'If the Shereef should come, I shall know what to say. In such matters, though I was born a girl, I am more clever than thou!'

Salim picked up his rod and gave the donkey a poke. He was in a great hurry to be off. Always he seemed to hear that great dog bay. His ears must be bewitched by a *djinn*. He

hustled the Donkey with Two Dark Feet to the edge of the town, and prodded it into Ibrahim's courtyard. At the commotion, a man appeared in the doorway of the house. Salim, who was busy hobbling the donkey in one corner of the untidy court, noticed thankfully that it was not Ibrahim, but that curly-haired 'English' whom he had seen there once or twice before. He salaamed and in polite Arabic wished the Effendi peace.

'Have you seen any sign of Ibrahim Wahabby?' the other demanded, and added impatiently, 'I have been waiting more than two hours. It is time he returned.'

'Often,' Salim told him, 'he does not return until nightfall.'

He tied the donkey's knees elaborately, lingering over it, for doubtless this Effendi had an overflowing purse and might give him a baksheesh. He even opened his mouth to suggest it, when there were voices outside, a dog's scratch and whine, and then a knock at the door! Salim's legs melted under him. He stared, unable to move. Another rap.

'Are you deaf?' demanded the Effendi. 'Some one knocks.' But Salim stayed rooted beside the donkey.

'Idiot!' said the Effendi, and called into the

house, 'Hassan! Hassan! Some one is at the gate.'

There appeared a foolish-looking servant, in a very soiled dress. He glared at Salim with his one good eye, as he opened the gate a grudging inch.

'Saïd! Saïd!' said a boy's voice. In the field of the Shereef had Salim heard it before! Oh, if the earth would only open and swallow him! A girl's voice added:

'We have lost our donkey and its trail leads here. Is your master in?'

'It was a donkey with one dark foot,' added a shriller voice, and then its owner's eye appeared at the crack of the door.

'There *is* a donkey in here, Vail!'

'Psst!' Salim was aware that the Effendi was addressing him from the door of the house. 'Say not that I am here, boy, or I shall have you beaten!' Before Salim could find tongue to answer, he had withdrawn into the house and Hassan, still muttering, was admitting the four.

'By your leave, not the dog!' he begged them, as a gray muzzle sniffed at the entrance. 'My master is a good Moslem, and if he should return to find that I had admitted a *dog* ——'

The muzzle was ordered back, and Salim

heard a disappointed whine as the gate closed. At that, suddenly, his bravado returned. Had the Smallest One herself not said the donkey they sought had only *one* dark foot? With half an eye one could see that this one had two!

‘To whom does he belong?’ The older girl pointed at the donkey. Hassan touched his forehead and heart.

‘By your leave, to my master ——’

‘Yes, it is his donkey,’ broke in Salim. ‘I pasture it with my flocks every day. Behold its two dark feet, Effendi!’ He motioned to the young Shereef to look. They were very dark indeed. The right was even darker than the left.

The four conversed in their own language. Finally, the Smallest One started toward the donkey, her hand out. Salim motioned her back with an imperative gesture.

‘Have a care,’ he warned her. ‘He is little, but already he can bite.’

‘Boo-la!’ cried the others, and the Smallest One reluctantly withdrew. Again more whispering. At last the elder girl spoke hesitatingly.

‘The Shereef Al’an’s donkey strayed or was stolen this afternoon and our dog has led us first to a flock of sheep, and then — here! It is

very strange! Our donkey had only one dark foot — but ——'

At that moment there was a deep growling outside and shrill imprecations in Arabic. The young Shereef shouted a command over the gate and the growling subsided, though with reluctance. The gate opened enough to allow an agitated gentleman to slip through. Salim began to tremble, for it was Ibrahim Wahabby.

'Dog!' cried the man, 'I shall teach thee to bring ——'

Then he perceived the four strangers and at once his voice became silken soft.

'I am your slave!' he protested, bowing. 'Had I known it was my lord's animal that guarded so carefully my own gate, I should not have presumed to enter until I was bidden. Salaam! And for what reason do you honor me with your presence — who am only a poor scribe?'

'A donkey,' said the Smallest One, looking not a bit abashed by the oiliness of Ibrahim's tongue. 'It has been stolen from the Shereef and the nose of our dog has led us to your gate ——'

'A donkey stolen — from Shereef Al'an? In *my* house? Impossible! See for yourselves if I speak not the truth! Salim, whose is that

donkey, mine or the Shereef Al'an's? Answer!

'It is thine! I swear it!' Salim put the palms of his hands together and rolled up innocent eyes. 'Observe the spot upon its forehead and its two dark feet!'

Ibrahim shrugged. 'You see ——'

The four were convinced at last and were about to depart. Praise be to ——! But the praise died unsung in Salim's heart, for as they reached the gate, the Smallest One hesitated and turned back. Unheeding Salim's warning, she walked straight up to the donkey.

'Sam-mee!' she said.

The little donkey wagged his head.

'Sam-mee!' repeated the Smallest One, and held out her hand. There was silence. She spoke a sharp word of command — once, twice. Salim could have laid his head in the dust for despair.

For the donkey — the devil-donkey — snorted, twitched an ear, pawed the ground uneasily with his right foot! The Smallest One reached down and took it in her hand.

Even Ibrahim made a gesture to ward off the Evil Eye.

The Smallest One was staring at the palm which a moment before had grasped the donkey's ankle. It was soiled — black as when

one handles charred wood. Salim, peeping stealthily at the donkey, saw with horror that its right foot was now streaked and gray.

‘Behold!’ said the Smallest One coolly to Ibrahim, displaying her dirty hand. ‘The black should be better applied next time if it is to fool the Shereef. Does the spot between the eyes also come off?’ And she rubbed her other hand over it.

Over her head Ibrahim Wahabby shot a look of murderous anger at Salim, as he bowed and laid his hand upon his breast.

‘I have sinned,’ he protested, ‘but, by Mohammed, it was with no consent of mine. This brat of a hireling shepherd hath done it, for what reason I know not, though I shall discover presently! Meanwhile, intercede, I pray you, that the great Shereef Al’an’s anger may not fall on me — his wretched servant. Give over the Shereef’s donkey, Salim!’

He did so, with fingers that shook. Ibrahim, still breathing abject apologies, bowed them out — keeping a discreet distance from the dog that licked her chops hungrily as the gate swung open. Then, his visitors well gone, Ibrahim swung around. His face was livid — terrible.

Salim looked wildly about for escape. There

was none. Ibrahim's hand was upon his thin shoulder, crushing it.

'Hassan!' he commanded, 'bring me the rod by the door.'

Salim writhed in his grasp. 'Mercy, oh, mercy, in the name of Allah!'

Hassan returned, the rod in his hand, his one eye leering.

In the door behind him appeared also the figure of the Effendi with the curly locks. Salim turned piteous eyes upon him.

'Effendi, I have said no word, I swear it! Save me!'

But the other only glanced at him carelessly.

'Beat him not too long, Ibrahim, for I have already waited many hours for you.'

Then indeed, the last shred of hope was torn from Salim's heaving breast. He hid his face with his arms and shrieked aloud in terror and despair.

CHAPTER IX

SHEREEF AL'AN

‘BEULAH, how did you guess?’

‘What made you think ——?’

‘Oh, I don’t know, my brain, I expect,’ said Beulah modestly. ‘I was pos’tive it was Sammy the minute I saw him, but you were all so sure Sammy’d had only one dark hoof that it puzzled me and I kept thinking and thinking, and just as we were going out I remembered that trick Vail was teaching him, so I thought I’d try it even though that boy said he’d bite me. But I never dreamed the black was going to come off.’ Beulah stopped and beamed at all the attention she was getting.

‘What do you think that man wanted to steal a baby donkey for?’ demanded Daphne. ‘He didn’t look so poor!’

‘I don’t believe he did steal it,’ said Kirstie. ‘I think it was the boy, Salim. He certainly looked scared to death from the minute we came in, did you notice?’

‘If we’d only listened to Lady Clare when she barked that time in the garden, maybe we’d have caught him in the act.’

'Good Lady.' Vail's hand went out to his dog. 'You knew what you were doing all right. Your pardon, old girl, for doubting you.'

Lady Clare turned her deep sad gaze upon him as if to say, 'Granted, old man. A dog's often misunderstood.' And then she yawned creakily by way of adding, 'Oh, well, it's over now. Do we go home?'

'Here come the Paters,' Vail scratched her behind her ear. 'And my word, will you look at mine!'

Colonel Atherton was swinging down the road beside the more modestly garbed Professor, in a white *aba* that billowed open and showed the gold and silver of his broad belt and the gleam of a curved knife thrust through it. The coils of rope that crowned his gold-and-white *kuffieh* were covered with gold thread so that they glittered like a diadem. Daphne blinked. This was no one that she knew but some magnificent personage out of the Arabian Nights; — perhaps even the good Caliph Haroun el Raschid himself!

'Well, you've led us a merry chase!' The English words were in strange contrast to his costume. 'Khalil came rushing in, babbling that you'd all disappeared with the donkey. I didn't even take time to disrobe — was all

dressed up to impress you at tea, you see. And now, after setting the town by the ear, we find you holding a peaceful *khalam* by the roadside!' The Colonel's tone was severe, but his eyes twinkled.

'We've just been rescuing Sammy,' Vail explained, 'thanks to ——'

'Hullo, what's that?'

It was a muffled cry of fright and pain. Along Lady Clare's back the short hair bristled. Another shriek and another, tearing the startled air.

'They're beating him,' Kirstie said with stiff lips. 'I knew they would! I saw it in that man's eyes.'

'Oh, I say!' cried Vail in a choked voice. 'I didn't know anything could sound like that! Father, it's the poor little beggar who took Sammy — they must be *killing* him!'

'Some one is being hurt, that's certain.'

At his tone four pairs of eyes turned to the Colonel. Only Beulah did not look, having buried hers, ostrich-like, in Kirstie's arm and stuck her fingers in her ears. Daphne gave Vail a quick glance and her heart missed a beat. That baffling difference between their faces was gone at last. Vail, for the first time since she had known him, looked exactly like

his father! A flash leaped from one pair of cold blue eyes to the other, as the Colonel asked:

‘Who lives in there?’

‘Some greasy-looking native ——’

He turned and strode to the gate, bringing down the flat of his hand upon it. When it opened grudgingly, he set his shoulder to it and flung it wide. With a roar Lady Clare shot out from under Vail’s hand and sprang through. Vail and the Professor leaped after her hastily.

‘Come on, Kirstie!’ Daphne was breathless with excitement.

‘No’ — Kirstie shook her head. ‘Bulie’ll want to go too and I’d rather she wouldn’t. You go on if you want to, Daffy.’

As Daphne stepped inside, the scene flashed across her sight with the vividness of a stage setting. In the background the ugly servant, his one eye bulging, flattened himself like a lizard against the wall. Near by her father and Vail sawed mightily upon Lady’s collar as she reared and roared at the master of the house, who cringed, a broken rod still gripped in his shaking hand. And in the center lay the boy, Salim, face downward and quivering at the feet of the silent Englishman who towered above him like an Avenging Angel. No longer

was he the genial Colonel Atherton, but the Shereef Al'an, whose deeds were sung in every Bedouin camp; whose name alone had been enough to send a thrill of terror through the Turkish lines. Even yet the mention of it could rout bandits on the Jericho Road!

Daphne raised awed eyes to that stern face framed in its glory of white and gold and as she did so she caught a movement beyond him in the house. She gasped, but no one noticed, for just then the Shereef unfolded his arms and spoke, briefly. Hassan scuttled off. Daphne watched him disappear through the doorway. Certainly no one was there now! Yet for an instant she could have sworn she saw framed within it a familiar face! But of course she must have been mistaken. It had only been one of the women peeping out.

Hassan returned with a long-necked *gullah* on whose fat porous sides drops of evaporated water stood out like the sweat on his own cheeks. This he emptied over the boy's feet. When the last drop had been spilled out, he bent grudgingly, lifted him, still sobbing, in his arms, and scuffled toward the gate. Daphne, while the Shereef delivered himself of some last warning in Arabic, followed wonderingly. Kirstie was waiting with Beulah by the road-

side. Hassan, in answer to her surprised question, told her surlily: the 'Sidi' had bade him carry the boy home to his mother. And he made it clear — since the Sidi was not within earshot — that he considered all this fuss so much foolishness. Over the worthless peasant boy, too, whom Ibrahim Wahabby had but thrashed a little upon the soles of his feet ——! Hassan rolled his one good eye at Heaven as Kirstie translated.

'*What* did you say that man's name was, Kirstie?' Daphne grabbed her arm.

'Ibrahim Wa— why, that's the antique maker, isn't it?' Kirstie stared too.

'Yes, and listen, do you remember what I told you about that Mr. Manning going to order some from him? And you wouldn't *believe* it? Well, it's true. He's in there now! I saw him! I don't think he wanted us to know it either ——' Daphne's face suddenly grew dark. 'Do you realize he never interfered with that whipping, Kirstie? Well, I hated him before, but now I *loathe* him!'

Colonel Atherton came out just then.

'Well, we settled him right enough,' he smiled, referring to Ibrahim. 'Next time Ibrahim will be sure there aren't any English within earshot when he applies the bastinado — told

him I could have him fined, and he simply writhed. Incidentally I learned the true tale of the missing donkey — I'll tell you after we see this youngster home.'

There arose an argument as to who should stay with the animals, a question happily solved by the arrival of old Khalil, the Ather-ton servant whose rheumatic joints had prevented his arriving sooner. Sammy was promptly handed over with Lady Clare also, for Vail declared his arms were stiff from holding her in and there was no telling whom she might want to bite next.

Then they started off, an odd procession, which gathered recruits as it went. Daphne hurried to tell her father about seeing Mr. Manning. He listened, smiling skeptically.

'I think it must have been one of the women you saw, ducky,' he said when she had finished. 'For if he was there, what was the point of his hiding the fact when he'd boasted quite openly before about getting some fake antiques?'

'Huh!' snorted Daphne. 'I'd like to stop him, if I could!'

'My dear! What a Christian spirit! Hello, this must be where the boy lives.'

They had paused by a stone wall which, for

lack of care, had begun to crumble in places. Within, was an untidy court, or sheepfold. Daphne noticed that it was divided by a stone partition.

'I've only seen one other like it,' Kirstie whispered to Daphne. 'They're very rare now. That wall is to divide the sheep from the goats, you know. Don't you remember the parable of the Last Judgment? They must have kept a big flock here once.'

Salim's mother came rushing out to meet them, so startled that, if she had any scruples over strange men seeing her face, she forgot them. When she understood what had happened, she rushed from one to the other, pressing their hands to her forehead and leaving moist kisses on them.

'My stars!' said Daphne to Vail, wiping hers off furtively. 'I almost wish she'd stayed scared till we were out of reach.'

They followed her into a little stone house at the far end of the double sheepfold, and Daphne looked around her in surprise and distaste. This was the first really native home she had been in. She picked her steps carefully across the dirty straw-covered floor which most obviously served as the stable, and up a flight of tipsy steps from which three hens and a

scrawny rooster fled, squawking hysterically, to a sort of mezzanine floor. Here on a pile of dingy bedding, pulled hastily out of some dark recess, Hassan dumped Salim down and, putting his hands to his brow, craved the Sidi's permission to depart. It being granted, he went, looking not unlike the long-legged rooster that ran ahead of him, still squawking, into the yard.

'Fascinating place!' The Professor looked round delightedly, his scientific interest getting the better of him. 'It's among peasants like these who live "close to the soil" that one finds traces of older civilizations. Foreign conquerors come and go — Israelite, Roman, Turk or British — but the humble farmer goes right on tilling his field and pasturing his flocks as his fathers did before him! Ever think of that?' He stared at the four, who answered respectfully that they hadn't. Colonel Atherton had not heard at all. He was too busy talking to Salim and his mother.

'Yes,' went on the Professor, even more enthusiastically, for this was one of his favorite subjects, 'you can even find utensils in use among them that are exactly like those placed in the old tombs. See that old cup over there in the corner, for instance, beside the big water

jar? People were using cups like that when water was turned into wine at Cana — perhaps even that very one ——’

‘I’ve just been telling Salim,’ Colonel Atherton interrupted, ‘that he can come and help old Khalil about the place, if he likes. He says he has a sister who can watch the sheep.’

‘I should think you’d be afraid he would steal everything!’ Daphne was horrified.

‘Oh, no!’ Kirstie put in. ‘Salim would lie down and die for him after this! Look at his eyes!’

‘We’ve certainly had enough excitement for one afternoon, haven’t we?’ Daphne drew a grateful breath of sweet fresh air when they reached the Atherton gate once more. ‘It seems ages since we got here.’

‘It’s hours, anyway.’ Her father looked at his watch. ‘We’ve got to be starting right home, girls.’

There were dismayed protests.

‘But you must have your tea!’ This from Colonel Atherton.

‘And I wanted some tennis!’ Vail looked particularly at Daphne.

‘I thought we were all going to dress up and have our pictures taken!’ Beulah, gazing at the Colonel’s finery, sounded so disappointed.

'I say!' Vail brightened. 'Why can't you spend the night, and we'll do all those things to-morrow?'

'I was about to suggest it myself,' declared the Colonel, 'if you don't mind doubling up a bit. We're going up to the city ourselves in the afternoon ——'

'I'm afraid' — the Professor shook his head — 'that I can't miss a morning at my work just now.'

'But the others aren't working!' Vail persisted.

Daphne slid a coaxing hand under her father's elbow. 'It would be just like a house party, Daddy!' she said. 'And I've always wanted a house party since I read the Little Colonel Books. Don't you think we might? I don't believe Dr. Laird would mind, do you, Kirstie?'

So it was decided that the girls should stay, and, as the Professor drove away, looking very solitary in the back of the Ford, they followed Jamileh, Khalil's wife, upstairs to the little room they should share, and washed off the germs of Ain Karim with many giggles and a bar of home-made soap.

CHAPTER X

THE ANTIQUE FACTORY

‘LET’s go put on some costumes and have our pictures taken, Vail,’ Daphne suggested.

They were resting under the feathery shadow of a eucalyptus next morning.

‘Silly things’ — Vail referred to the costumes. ‘And dressing up is such a kid’s trick. I’d like another set of tennis.’

‘Wouldn’t you put your father’s *aba* on just for one minute?’ pleaded Kirstie sweetly. ‘I imagine you’d look exactly like him in it! But maybe he wouldn’t let you ——’

‘*Let me?*’ said Vail. ‘*Let me?* Rather! Come along and I’ll show you.’

‘And after all’ — for Daphne couldn’t bear to have Vail think her babyish — ‘it isn’t the silly dressing up we used to do when we were kids. It’s really impersonating — the way actors do.’

As Colonel Atherton was out, they chose their own costumes.

‘I feel like a dime museum,’ Daphne giggled, as Kirstie adjusted a heavy circlet of coins on her head and threw over it a long embroidered

scarf. 'And when I walk, I clank!' She did a few dancing steps, and the four chains about her neck and her dozen bracelets and the moneyed headpiece all jangled violently.

'Look out!' warned Kirstie, who was exceedingly pretty as a maid of Bethlehem, 'or you'll jiggle off one of those dower-coins of yours — and then, like the woman in the Bible, you'd have to light a candle and sweep diligently till you found it.'

'Goodness!' said Daphne. 'How do you ever remember all those stories, Kirstie? I don't.'

'My dress hasn't got any 'mbroidery on it at all,' complained Beulah, eyeing its straight homespun folds with disfavor, while Kirstie twisted up her two braids and concealed them under a three-cornered piece of brilliant pink cotton voile.

'Never mind, you look more like a real everyday native than we do, Bulie.'

'Hurry up, Vail's been ready for ages,' interrupted Daphne. 'I can see him strutting round the garden.'

'He *is* like his father,' whispered Kirstie, as Vail wheeled and salaamed. He was not wearing the gorgeous white costume, but one of black-and-gold stripes. In spite of his boast,

Vail had let the white one alone. However, he was impressive enough as he posed with Kirstie and Daphne for his harem and Beulah took their picture with his father's kodak.

'Now, you come and be the youngest wife, Bulie.' Kirstie took the camera. And after she had snapped it, they discovered that Beulah hadn't turned the film and both pictures had to be taken over again. It was lots of fun.

'I'll wager we could pass ourselves off as natives very easily,' Vail boasted, folding his arms in imitation of his father's grand gesture the day before.

Kirstie smiled. 'I doubt it!'

'How much do you wager?' persisted Vail loftily.

Daphne had a daring idea. 'I'll bet we could, too, Vail! I tell you, let's have a prize for the one who makes the best native. We can use that silly olive-wood penholder which a bead man in Bethlehem gave me for buying a lot of strings from him.'

'I don't want an olive-wood penholder!'

'Of course not, Vail. Who does? That's why it'll make a good prize. Prizes are never what you want — they're what you get.'

'Oh!' cried Beulah, eyes brightening, 'I'd like it, Daffy. The one I've got at home is all chewed on the top.'

‘Yes, and this one would be, too, in a couple of days if you had it!’ Kirstie prophesied darkly. ‘But don’t worry, we shan’t fool any one, and I don’t see how we’d tell, anyway, which of us came nearest to it!’

But the others disagreed and, after some discussion, they decided to go for a walk and see what happened.

Lady Clare, who was taking a nap under the eucalyptus tree, rose, stretched, and proposed to come along. She looked hurt when she was sent back, but, of course, as Beulah explained to her, she would only give them away.

At the village fountain where half the women in town were washing their clothes, no one succeeded even remotely. Somewhat discomfited, they hurried on.

‘Maybe we’ll meet some one along the road,’ suggested Vail. ‘For if we go into the bazaar and are recognized as quickly as that, we shan’t be able to move for the crowd. Spread out a little! You keep so close to me that you spoil my chances. I’d have had those women fooled if you hadn’t come up, I know.’

‘You walk too fast,’ Kirstie told him. ‘Stalk on ahead, Vail. Maybe some one will take you for a Sheikh, even if you are sort of gorgeous for every day!’

Vail, moving up front obediently, gave Kirstie a grin. 'I say,' he said, 'don't you know you ought to encourage me to do it wrong, so you could earn that wonderful pen-holder?'

'Oh, Kirstie or I'll get it anyway,' Beulah assured him placidly. She had removed her shoes and stockings and was kicking her bare toes in the dust in spite of her sister's protest.

'Why not, Kirstie! I always go barefoot at home when it's hot! Besides, I look more natural that way.'

'How about trying that shepherd up there?' Vail finally suggested.

'I think it's sort of foolish,' said Daphne, pausing to eye the hot hillside. 'I don't see how we're going to tell, anyway. And the sun's fierce.'

Kirstie, who had pointed that very difficulty out long ago, forbore to say anything.

'Oh, come along,' urged Vail, 'you can't back out now.'

They trailed along single file, and Daphne, thinking of shepherds, wondered aloud how Salim's feet were. 'We might go call on him! Ouch, the stones go right through these Turkish slippers!'

'Hush!' said Kirstie; and, 'Silence, second

wife!' ordered Vail, 'or I'll divorce you on the spot!'

Daphne jingled her dower-coins rudely in answer.

As they neared the oak tree under which the little shepherd squatted, Beulah suddenly exclaimed, 'Why, that's not a boy! That's that little girl who was so mad at us yesterday! Don't you remember — when Lady Clare walked up to her?'

It certainly was and, sad to say, she knew them immediately, in spite of their disguise!

'*Naharak said*,' she shrilled, showing all her bad teeth in a grin; and, grabbing the nearest hand which happened to be Beulah's, she kissed it.

'What's all the affection about?' asked Vail, getting behind Daphne.

'She says she's Munireh, Salim's sister,' announced Beulah.

'Really?' Vail came out again more interested, to look her over. 'She kept that to herself yesterday! I suppose this is his flock, too? No wonder Lady Clare led us right to it!'

'I'll bet she helped black up Sammy's foot,' said Daphne. 'She looks as if she could! What's she talking about, Kirstie?'

‘She says she wishes we would take her back to Jerusalem where she can learn how to make lace for the Americans.’

‘Goodness!’ Daphne eyed the eager face dubiously. It didn’t look as if it had ever been washed. Yet, if a few layers were scrubbed off and that hideous ring removed from her nose, and she were given a handkerchief instead, she might be — almost — attractive! So she wanted to make lace, did she? Poor little kid! Daphne was sorry for her. She would ask Colonel Atherton if something couldn’t be done about it.

‘Whew!’ Vail backed off again. ‘What’s up now?’ For Munireh’s face had suddenly darkened and she pointed a dirty finger toward the road.

‘Ibrahim Wahabby is coming!’ They whirled and there, sure enough, jogging along the road were two men on lop-eared donkeys.

Daphne exclaimed, ‘What did I tell you? That’s Mr. Manning with him. Where do you think they’re going?’

‘Munireh’s sure Ibrahim’s got some sort of vengeance up his sleeve,’ explained Kirstie. ‘But I don’t believe it. I think he’s too much afraid of Colonel Atherton.’

Vail’s eyes snapped. ‘Let’s trail them a bit.

If Ibrahim is up to more mischief, I'll let Dad know and ——'

'They're going pretty fast,' began Kirstie doubtfully.

At that moment the donkeys turned sharply off the road and began to climb the hill.

'Come on!' cried Daphne; 'I'm dying to know where they're going!'

Leaving a mystified Munireh behind them, they too started uphill, trying to look as 'native' as possible. At the summit the donkeys stopped. The two men dismounted and, glancing casually in the direction of the four, who had halted uncertainly, started off on foot, for a little knoll upon which rose an abandoned watch-tower, relic no doubt of bandit-infested days.

Daphne had a happy thought. 'Maybe that's where Ibrahim makes his antiques.'

'No, they're going by,' and, even as Vail answered, the men disappeared behind the shoulder of the knoll. There was no further sign of them and, at last, reluctantly the four decided to turn back. Reaching the friendly oak under which Munireh's little flock was crowding, they dropped in the shade once more.

'Wow, this thing's heavy!' Daphne put her

hand up to push her headdress from her perspiring forehead and gave a cry of dismay. Her fingers had found a gap among the coins.

‘It was all right a little while ago, I know it was! I lifted it to cool my head off, and the coins were all on then.’

‘Well, don’t worry about it.’ Vail yawned and stretched his full length on the ground. ‘Dad won’t say anything to *you*, you know.’

‘Yes, but he’ll think it!’ Daphne was distressed. ‘Maybe he wouldn’t have wanted me to wear it if he’d known.’ She got up slowly. Oh, dear, why was she always so good at losing things?

‘It must be somewhere round. No, Kirstie, I’ll hunt myself, since I lost it. You look as if you had a headache.’

‘I’ll help you, Daffy!’ Beulah scrambled to her feet. ‘I love to find things. I’m usually good at it. Once when mother lost her pearl pin ——’ She continued to present her testimonials as she followed Daphne up the hill.

‘If there’s no luck, let me know and I’ll come too,’ Vail called after them lazily.

Why should she take it so hard when he didn’t, Daphne wondered? But then he was a relation of the Colonel’s and she wasn’t. Rela-

tions could lose things, and it wasn't nearly so bad as if a stranger did.

They reached the top of the hill, but there was no coin glinting in the dust. 'This is where we stopped, I think.' Daphne looked about her doubtfully. In the distance the hobbled donkeys grazed, with little grotesque hops from place to place. Beulah had begun to go round in circles, her nose close to the ground — like a little dog trying to pick up the scent. If she hadn't been so sick with heat and discouragement, Daphne would have made a pun of that.

All at once Beulah dropped on hands and knees and squealed, triumphantly, 'I've found it!' She dropped it into Daphne's joyous palm and stood up with a satisfied sigh, but suddenly she grabbed her by the arm.

'Look over there — quick! Somebody just sneaked inside that old watch-tower!'

Daphne looked. The tower appeared as deserted as ever. Nothing moved on the landscape except the donkeys and a great white stork which rose into the sky and flapped heavily away.

'You must have imagined it, Bulie.'

'No, I didn't. I saw him just as *clear*. He was sort of slipping along. He wasn't an Arab

either, for I could see his legs and I couldn't have, if he'd had skirts on.'

'Let's sneak up and see.' Daphne caught fire suddenly. She would love to know if it really was the antique factory — not that she could do anything about it, of course; she didn't suppose there was a law against making new antiques! — but she would just like to see. It wouldn't take long, and the others waiting under the oak tree would think she was still hunting the lost coin.

'Oo — Daffy,' Beulah gasped, half fearful, half delighted. 'What if they recognized us?'

'They won't unless we get too close. And even if they do, they couldn't do anything about it.'

They raced along the hillside past the donkeys until they reached a point at the rear of the old watch-tower. To all appearances it was still quite deserted. They hesitated, uncertain of their next move.

Finally, Daphne whispered, 'Let's go up closer. If any one is inside, they won't see us, because there don't seem to be any windows.'

They crossed a tiny brooklet that was only a damp spot bordered with rushes, and scrambling up the knoll found themselves directly

under the rough stone wall. Thistles grew thick against it, and lizards shot off in every direction at their approach.

'Look out for scorpions,' whispered Beulah as Daphne laid her hand against an unmortared stone. As they made their way cautiously along, Daphne's hand tightened on Beulah's wrist.

'I hear some one talking!' she breathed.

From somewhere came the subdued sound of voices.

'It's Arabic.' Beulah was taut with her effort to hear. 'But it's too smothered — I can't make it out.'

They crept on and presently discovered a narrow opening high above them that was no more than a wider crack between two stones. The voices were more audible here, but not sufficiently so for them to make out what was being said. Daphne was sure, however, that one voice was Mr. Manning's and one no doubt Ibrahim's; but there was still a third which neither of the girls recognized.

'Daphne,' Beulah stretched up to whisper in her ear, 'could you hold me up without making any noise? I'm not so awful heavy, and I might understand what they're saying, if ——'

'I don't know,' doubtfully; 'I'll try.'

Daphne grabbed Beulah around the stomach and hoisted her. Heedless of scorpions, Beulah flattened her body against the wall and clung by her fingers to convenient cracks. She was now on a level with the window and applied eye and ear to it alternately. Daphne on the ground was half wild with suspense. What was going on? What was Beulah seeing? An antique in the making, or what? She was becoming heavier every minute, too! Daphne's back was breaking and her arms were numb. Once she let her slip and Beulah's hands scratched the stones before Daphne secured a grip on her stomach again.

'I say!' Beulah glared over her shoulder, forming the words noiselessly. '*Hold* me, will you?'

Daphne had a bad moment while she waited to see if those inside had heard the scratching, for it had sounded thunderous to her! It would be very embarrassing if Mr. Manning should come out and find them in such an equivocal position!

But nothing happened. Beulah was listening more intently than ever. Daphne set her teeth. She simply could not hold her up much longer. She had no control over her arms now — they were going to drop — to drop —

With a crash Beulah slid earthward and landed in a bed of thistles.

'Ouch! My feet!' She rolled over hastily, her hands threshing wildly around at the prickly thistles. Her indignant face was streaked with dirt. But Daphne did not give her time to sputter. She dragged her away, the thistle heads still clutched in her fists, and they scuttled round the tower and were over the brook again before Ibrahim Wahabby appeared on one side of the tower and Mr. Manning's curly head was poked round the other.

Beulah, overcome by the sting of her outraged feet, sat down abruptly and Daphne dropped beside her, back half turned toward the tower, hoping against hope that their costumes would prove an effective camouflage. Out of the corner of an eye she saw Mr. Manning and Ibrahim move, stop suddenly to listen, and then slip on again, each keeping close to his side of the wall. It occurred to Daphne, much interested in these odd maneuvers, that they were stalking each other! They met head-on suddenly with a cry and a grab, and Daphne could have laughed at their mutual discomfiture, were it not for the fact that she and Beulah were now in plain view of the two of them. At any instant they would be

discovered. She had a quick, desperate inspiration. She leaned over and poked the panting Beulah heartlessly in the ribs.

‘Pick some flowers!’ she ordered her beneath her breath. ‘Hurry up! We’ll pretend we were just playing around. Oh, Beulah! You’ve got to! You’re the one that looks and talks like a native! If I got up, I’d give us both away.’

With one wild look at her, Beulah scrambled to her feet. Daphne held her breath. If only Beulah wouldn’t lose her nerve now, and if the men would only stay on the other side of the brook, they might escape yet without revealing their identity! With shaking fingers she reached for the blossoms within reach, little pink daisies and red poppies, wild mignonette. Under other circumstances, it would have been a joy to gather them. She twisted so that her back was toward the men, and she dared not look around to see what was happening.

There was an awful moment of suspense, before she heard Ibrahim’s angry shout. Beulah, her hands full of flowers, her brown, dirty face wrinkled impudently, straightened and shrieked back, like any ‘fella’s’ child. Daphne sighed. She might have known Beulah could rise to such an occasion! She cast

a quick glance over her shoulder. The men were talking together, uncertainly. What next? Would they come nearer? At last — oh, joy, oh, great relief! — Ibrahim shrugged and they moved off together around the tower. Before he disappeared, Ibrahim called back:

'Imshi!'

Oh, wouldn't they 'beat it' as fast as they could? They did, in spite of smarting feet and encumbering garments, until at last they were on the familiar goat-path again and Vail and Kirstie were coming toward them, searching the hillside in alarm.

'But what did you *see*? What did you hear?' — when Daphne and Beulah had explained their adventure between gasps.

'You'd better let Daphne tell it.' Kirstie pulled her sister to her side; but Daphne shook her head.

'No, it's Bulie's story; she heard it all. I only held her up and dropped her in the thistles.'

'Go ahead, then, Bulie.' Vail was quite red with impatience. 'Tell us what you saw through the window!'

'Well, I saw one man and a half,' began Beulah. 'The whole man was Mr. Manning, and the half was — it was not Ibrahim Wa-

habby' — she paused to scowl over the memory.

'Then who was it?' They crowded closer and for the second time in two days Beulah was a Person of Importance. She could not resist a happy little skip as she continued, somewhat breathlessly:

'That's just what I can't remember! He was an Arab, and I know I've seen him before, but ——'

'It wasn't that one-eyed Hassan?'

'No, he was dirtier than Hassan,' said Beulah, at which they all looked skeptical. 'And he had two eyes.'

'How do you know if you saw only half of him?' This was Vail.

But Beulah ignored him as she went on: 'And — this — is — what — they said! — Do you want to know what they said?'

'Of course! Go on, Bulie! Don't be so aggravating!'

'Well, they said — I couldn't hear all of it, for you were always letting me slip, Daffy; but it was about money. The *two-eyed* man' — she glanced at Vail — 'wanted Mr. Manning to pay him a hundred pounds, and Mr. Manning said he'd give him thirty. And they were arguing about it when Daffy let me slide the

first time. When I listened again, they were still at it, and the Arab was swearing and asking Ibrahim if he thought a hundred too much for a gold box that was there for the taking — at least it sounded like that — and just then Daphne dropped me into a lot of thistles!' Beulah regarded her ankles pensively. 'It's lucky I hung on to those old thistle-tops, Daffy, for when Ibrahim yelled, what in the name of — (no, Kirstie, I'm not going to say it!) — we had been doing around that old tower, I yelled back, too, as loud as I could, that we had gone for cyclamen and had found only thistles! So then they walked off and told us to get out — and we did!'

'We fooled them all right,' broke in Daphne triumphantly. 'Beulah was simply great. I wish you could have heard her!'

'Do I get the prize, then?' demanded Beulah, hanging on to her arm as they reached the Atherton gate.

'My goodness, I'd forgotten all about prizes,' laughed Daphne. 'But I'll say you do, Beulah!'

Beulah skipped:

'Honest and *truly*!
Black and *Bluely*!
Lay me down and ——'

She stopped before Kirstie could suppress her and, running back, pulled her sister's braid. 'I'm going to get the penholder, Kirstie, and I'm not going to chew it at all — not the teeniest, weeniest bit!'

'What do you think about the golden box?' At lunch, they discussed the mysterious events of the morning.

Colonel Atherton grinned, 'Some new antique, I suppose.'

'But a hundred pounds,' protested Vail, 'is an awful lot of money.'

'Oh, that's just an opening bid, you know — besides, Beulah may not have heard correctly.' He looked at his watch and rose.

'Oh, Colonel Atherton' — Daphne had not forgotten Munireh's face, so wistful in spite of its dirt — 'do you think Salim's sister could ever get into the lace-school — she asked us ——'

Vail unexpectedly supported her. 'She's a bright little beggar too. Why don't you see if you can do anything about it, Father? She deserves a chance, I think.'

As they reached the red-roofed houses of New Jerusalem, clustered close as gay fungus along the gray ancient walls, Daphne observed with a sigh:

'Thank goodness, we didn't see any bandits to-day!'

'You won't, either!' declared Colonel Atherton. 'At least not those. They've skipped beyond Jordan. The soldiers scattered them. If there should happen to be any still on this side, they'll soon be captured, don't worry.'

No one noticed in the last chatter of thanks and farewells that Beulah had grown strangely thoughtful. But when later Daphne had gone to her own room to remove her coat, Beulah rushed after, still trailing hers by one arm.

'I remember it now, Daphne — what Colonel Atherton said made me remember — the man I saw half of, there in the tower, was the bandit that tried to pull off your bracelet that day. I *knew* I'd seen him before, somewhere, and that's where!'

CHAPTER XI

ILL WINDS

‘THE bandit?’ Daphne’s jaw dropped. ‘Bulie — really? Are you sure? Oh, I must tell Father the minute he comes in ——’ For Frau Weisz had told her he was still at the monastery.

Yet when he did finally come she forgot all about the bandit, temporarily at least, for he had been to the post-office on the way back and the foreign mail was in at last.

‘There’s a letter for you, ducky,’ as he kissed her. He handed her a thin blue envelope. Daphne’s heart leaped. It was from Gerry!

‘Is that all, Father?’ She waited, eager to slip away to read it in private and when he told her, ‘Guess it is,’ she started for her own room. But before she had reached the door Frau Weisz appeared and announced dinner in a tone of voice that let them know it was something which couldn’t bear waiting. So Daphne with a sigh postponed her treat until later. After all, as her grandmother used to say, ‘If it’s good news it will keep; if it’s bad news

you'll know it soon enough.' And of course the first part only could apply to Gerry's news to-night!

'Well, did you rescue any donkeys to-day?' The Professor was in the best of spirits. He beamed on the roast mutton, turning it over as genially as if he hadn't seen it or its relative in some form or other every night that they had eaten at the House of Bread. And he spooned out the cheese soufflé generously, which was pleasant, for soufflé was a popular and infrequent dish.

'No, but wait till you hear what *did* happen!'

'We saw one of our own robbers!' cried Beulah, unable to contain the news longer.

'You don't say! Did you go up and introduce yourselves?' inquired the Professor brightly, and the three of them chorused, 'No-o!' and rushed headlong into the tale ——

'Now what do you think of that?' Daphne asked him when it was finished.

'That there's no telling what you young people will get into next!' Her father shook his head.

'Oh, I mean about the bandit and Mr. Manning!'

'Apparently Mr. Manning has more fish to fry than we know of,' he responded thought-

fully, after a minute; 'or, perhaps, it's the same fish being fried on another side!'

'How many sides has a fish?' Beulah wanted to know, sitting up straight to see what the dessert was and slumping when she perceived it to be pudding again.

'It depends — they come all shapes. We'll ask Colonel Atherton what he thinks about reporting the bandit's whereabouts.'

'But what about the box and the hundred pounds?'

'I haven't the slightest idea! Can't keep track of all my own business, let alone Mr. Manning's.'

Daphne made a little face at him. What an excellent humor he was in! This was certainly the psychological moment to approach him about Italy! After dinner she hurried away to read Gerry's letter quickly before anything else had a chance to interfere. She curled up on the bed as she tore it open.

DEAREST DAFF: [Gerry always dealt in superlatives.]

I've got the most terrible thing to tell you; — we're not going to be in Italy next winter at all! We're going to be home! I feel so *bad*! It's all because of a queer pain *Maman's* got.

At first she thought maybe she could take a German cure for it and if she had she was going to leave us with a Miss Harper's Travel School that we met in Geneva. We'd have had *oceans* of fun, for of course Miss Harper takes only the *best* people; — and *that* was the heavenly plan I was going to write you about.

But now, after thinking it all over, *Maman* has decided maybe she'd better go home to her own doctor who knows her condition, and we sail next week on the Olympic. I'm simply *sick* about not seeing you, Daff darling . . .

Daphne dropped the letter out of numb fingers and it slid off the bed and lay open on the rug. She did not even reach for it. She sat staring across the bedroom with pained, unwinking eyes.

No Italy! Gerry was going home! There was to be no Italy in May — only Palestine ahead of her for months and months and months —

Her throat felt so full she could scarcely breathe. No Italy? It couldn't be true. She was in a bad dream, and would wake up presently. She stared around at the ugly yellow dresser with the knob on its middle drawer missing; at the washstand in the corner with

its yellow pitcher and bowl and the soapdish and the used towel hung lopsidedly across the rack; at the smelly little old oil-stove and the frayed rugs, and the great barred windows; — and Gerry's letter lying open on the floor. No, there was nothing dreamlike in any of these. It was real! Real! She was not going to wake up, ever!

And suddenly she threw herself face downward across the bed and began to cry. She didn't care whether any one heard her or not. She sobbed and sobbed.

'*Daphne*, is that you? What's happened, daughter? What is it?'

Turning her swollen face a little, she saw her father bending over her, his face full of concern, and in the doorway Kirstie and Beulah, startled and solicitous. Then she buried her head again and wailed.

'Go 'way, won't you! I d-don't want anybody!'

'Go finish your game, girls,' she heard her father say, and then, as the door closed softly, there was a rustle of paper and a long silence. He had picked up the letter and was reading it. Oh, dear, if he'd only go away too and leave her in peace.

Another rustle. He had finished it now.

She did not look up again, but she could feel him standing above her, staring down. Finally, he spoke, and there was something in his voice that made her hold back her sobs to listen.

‘Why, ducky,’ he was saying, ‘I never knew you were really *counting* on this, or I’d have told you long ago it was impossible!’

‘I kept t-telling you and t-telling you!’

‘I’m sorry, I didn’t understand. You never came right out and *said* so, dear! And I thought you would realize that getting you here was all I could afford just now, even if your Aunt May offered to pay your expenses once you reached Italy. Besides —’ he sighed — ‘you seemed so much more contented lately. I thought you were really beginning to like Palestine.’

‘*Like* it!’ And all her accumulated discontent; her sense of marking time, until she got away; her pent-up homesickness and rebellion, burst out in broken sentences.

‘I w-wouldn’t have said a thing,’ she kept repeating, ‘if I could only have gone in May! I w-was holding on t-to that and then s-suddenly it wasn’t there t-to hold on to!’ She turned away her head, ‘I — I’m s-sorry!’ she whispered after a while, for she had seen his face. And she began to cry again.

He sat down beside her and waited until she should finish, for, in spite of her desire to continue, she found her tears stopping presently of their own accord. She was cried out. At last she rolled over on her back and looked up at him out of swollen eyes. He glanced down, rose without comment, and went to the washstand, returning with a corner of the towel dripping between his fingers.

‘It’ll feel good,’ was all he said as she accepted it shakily and patted her eyes with it. It did feel good. It seemed to cool off her fevered spirits. She gave a long, quavering sigh as he took it again.

‘Now, if I were you,’ he said briskly, ‘I’d get undressed and crawl into bed right! Unless you’d like to go play anagrams for a little while.’

‘Oh, no!’ She shrank and her eyes filled again. She couldn’t face Kirstie and Beulah to-night. She didn’t know that she could ever face them again.

‘All right, ducky. Call me when you’re ready to say good-night.’

Later, at her wavering hail, he came in and stood patting her cheek after he had kissed her good-night. ‘Things still look pretty black? Well, it may sound like cold comfort to you,

but — they won't always be so, ducky. Believe me, I know! If you can only set your teeth and hang on *long* enough, the blackest night will show signs of dawn sooner or later. It's only a question of time — and we can always stand things when we know they aren't going to last forever!

Daphne moved her face away from his touch. She wasn't so sure she wanted her night to lighten. Her mouth quivered again. 'I suppose you think it's silly, making a fuss over just being disappointed! But I can't help it, and please don't tell me I'm young and I'll get over it.'

'Don't worry, my dear, you'll probably never feel worse than at this minute, because when you're older you'll have more to lean on.' He smiled. 'You'll see what I mean some day. Go to sleep now, and if you haven't said your prayers yet, you'd better add a petition that you'll look presentable by morning. You're no beauty now, let me tell you!'

At breakfast next morning Kirstie and Beulah never said a word about the night before. Daphne was grateful. If they had she knew she couldn't have stood it; she'd have rushed right back to her room and begun crying all over again. The tears were still so

near the surface that when she had a moment to think they welled up in her eyes. Luckily she didn't have many moments, for every one talked a great deal at breakfast and when it was over ——

'Run and get your things on!' said her father. 'We're going to be Cook's tourists this morning.'

'I thought you had to work,' objected Daphne, surprised.

'Well, I worked all day yesterday, so I'm entitled to a little vacation!' Her father made a great show of feeling abused. So tightly had she curled herself into her shell of self-com-miseration that she could not come out of it far enough to appreciate the fact that he was doing this for her sake, though dimly she realized it.

Outside, where the fresh March air was sweet with the smell of spring in the East — a smell of sesame and budded jasmine and pomegranate blooms; of almond trees and apricot; and above all that faint far-off celestial sweetness which betokens orange blossoms — Daphne found her spirits lifting unbidden and the weight in her breast insensibly lightening. She even found to her amazement that she could laugh with Beulah and Kirstie over a

camel padding past them with a supercilious curl to its upper lip, only to reveal on its rear-end a square of blue cloth attached to its shabby hide like a patch on the seat of an old pair of trousers!

But when they stopped at the hospital on the way home to pay a surprise call on Mrs. Laird, another blow was waiting for her, and all the unhappiness which had only been hovering in the background swooped down again sevenfold upon her. For the Lairds were going home next week.

'All the ill winds seem to blow at once,' she thought forlornly. With May a shining star ahead of her it had been bad enough, but now ——!

'I don't see how I'm going to endure this place without you, Kirstie!' Daphne said a few days later.

Kirstie had come in to return a nightgown of Daphne's which she had borrowed to cut the pattern of. It was V-necked and had next to no sleeves at all.

'I'm going to make one just like it when I get home.' She put it carefully back in the bureau drawer. 'You've got such lovely things to wear, Daphne.'

'I?' Daphne looked astonished. Her things

had always seemed so simple compared to Gerry's. Still, it was gratifying to have Kirstie think them beautiful. She repeated, putting her arm around her, 'I don't see what I'll do without you and Beulah.'

'There's Vail.'

'Oh, Vail!' Yes, of course, there was Vail. Or would be rather when he got back from that Arab shindig his father was taking him to down near Beersheba. He had come around yesterday with his farewells and the snapshots taken at Ain Karim.

'I like Vail all right,' said Daphne, 'but he isn't *you*, just the same!'

Kirstie looked pleased, and hesitated as though hunting for the right words. At last she said slowly: 'I want you to know that I'm sorry you've felt so bad, Daffy dear. Bulie and I've both been sorry! But I knew you didn't want to talk about it, just at first. I didn't either once when I had an awful disappointment like that! You see I'd saved and saved to buy a violin — I've always wanted to play, you know, ever since I heard one that time I was back in Scotland; and finally Dad gave me the rest of the money and we sent away for it, and I could hardly sleep nights waiting — and when it came — it was all smashed! I couldn't

bear to have any one mention it for ever so long. And even yet I don't like to think about it much.'

Daphne had half turned away during Kirstie's confession. She was glad Kirstie had said something, though it was hard to tell her so, in words.

'Thanks!' she said at last; and feeling that inadequate she added, 'Thank you for telling me about the violin too. I didn't know any one else had ever felt bad, like that.' She gave Kirstie a tremulous squeeze and grinned, 'Anyway, we've had grand times together, haven't we?'

'I've never had such a good time in my life, especially since Mother began to get better. I'll never forget it, never, never! I didn't want to come very much at first, either,' she confessed. 'I was afraid you'd be sort of, well — sniffy; but you weren't a bit, Daffy, not the teeniest bit.'

'And to think,' said Daphne to her father next morning, after the last farewells were said, and the car, with Mrs. Laird wrapped up carefully on its back seat, had disappeared with a fusillade of back-firing — 'To think that at first I wasn't keen about their staying!'

'Dr. Laird was telling me yesterday' — they

were walking back alone toward the house — ‘that you had done the girls a world of good. They were getting to be regular old ladies!’ — the Professor chuckled — ‘though I told him there wasn’t much danger of Beulah growing gray ahead of time! He was saying that both he and their mother appreciated the way you took them right in, and were so friendly and everything!’

‘Oh, dear, but I wasn’t — not at first, anyway!’ Daphne felt ashamed again.

‘Weren’t you now?’ Her father twinkled at her as he opened the front door and let her go through. ‘And here I told him very haughtily to remember it was *my* daughter he was speaking of! Guess I’ll have to write and apologize.’

Daphne made a face at his teasing. She hung around him wistfully as he got his papers together preparatory to starting for his morning’s work.

‘Sorry I’ve got to run off and leave you like this, ducky darling. What are you going to do this morning?’

‘Nothing, I guess.’ She drummed her fingers on the window-sill and stared outdoors.

‘Too bad Vail couldn’t have been away some other time.’ He paused, brief-case in hand, to

look at her. 'Suppose they're halfway down by now.'

'They were going to stop at Ain Karim first. I told Vail' — Daphne smiled faintly — 'if he heard any more about Mr. Manning and the bandit to be sure and let me know.'

Her father still hesitated at the door.

'I wonder if you'd do something for me,' he said finally. 'That study in there really needs to be house-cleaned, and I don't want to let Frau Weisz's orderly soul loose on it — she'd throw everything into the fire! If you'll clean out the drawers for me, and make a pile of all the papers that you aren't sure about, so I can go through them myself to-night, I'd be ever so much obliged.'

She said she would, though without much enthusiasm, and then, as he started off, 'Haven't you found out anything from that old manuscript yet?'

He frowned and shook his head. 'No-o — so far it hasn't given the slightest hint. I'm beginning to wonder if it isn't hidden in the text somewhere — like a code, you know. But if it is I certainly can't find the key yet. Of course, I hope to sooner or later, but it's going to be a long, long job, I'm afraid.'

It was a long job he had given her, too,

Daphne very soon decided. Dr. Donald Parish had had a positive mania for collecting! Apparently he never threw anything away.

But at last she finished the desk, and turned her attention to the drawer at the bottom of the huge bookcase. It had to be inched out, first on one side and then on the other, and it was crammed so full that it spilled clippings and papers over her lap at every jerk. She gathered them up. They all pertained to archæology, she noticed. There were dusty pamphlets and columns cut out of yellowed newspapers, scraps of notes in every Christian tongue under Heaven and some in curious heathen chicken-tracks. It all seemed too valuable to throw any away, and she made neat little mounds of it for her father to examine later.

She worked so hard that she was surprised when the front door opened and closed, and realized her father was back for lunch. Hastily she shoved the drawer in. It stuck, and, growing impatient, she let it alone, for she had to wash up before lunch, and she could hear Frau Weisz moving in the dining-room.

‘You’ve certainly done a good job,’ her father commended her as they sat down at the table. ‘I’ll help you finish up, if you like,

afterwards, and then we'll be through with it ——'

'The old thing sticks,' Daphne complained when, true to his promise, her father bent over the drawer a half-hour later. 'I couldn't get it closed.'

'Something's caught.' He gave a push and there was a noise of paper mashing. 'It's entirely too full, anyway.' He managed to work it out, and set it beside him on the floor. 'Now we'll see what caused the trouble.' Reaching in he drew out a shabby soft-backed notebook. He glanced through it casually. 'Hm, Parrish's handwriting — seems to be notes. Funny I never noticed it before — I suppose it slid back the first time I opened the drawer.' He flipped the yellowed pages over. 'I'll save it till to-night. We'll never get a trip in if I take time now.'

So presently they drove down to Bethany to see the house of Mary and Martha, and the tomb of Lazarus, and all the other dubious relics which the dirty little town displayed so enthusiastically.

When they returned, at dinner-time, dusty and very hungry, a small figure, squatted on the veranda, uncurled itself and salaamed profoundly.

‘For goodness’ sake!’ The Professor stared. ‘What’s this we’ve acquired?’

It was Salim. Salim in a brand-new dress with a red sash wrapped round his middle. Salim in shiny pointed slippers and a little red fez tipped at a saucy angle over one bright eye.

‘What are you doing here?’ In her astonishment, Daphne forgot he couldn’t understand. Fortunately, Frau Weisz appeared just then.

‘The whole afternoon he will sit because the Shereef has said the letter is to you only to be delivered!’ She looked her outrage, as Salim, throwing her a dark glance, fished inside his sash for an envelope which he shoved into Daphne’s hands. Then he squatted contentedly on his heels again.

‘Didn’t take his feet long to heal, did it?’ The Professor took his glasses out of his pocket and perched them on his nose. Daphne held the note so they could both read at the same time.

It was in Vail’s scrawly hand and was dated that morning at Ain Karim. It said:

Mr. Manning is laid low at Ibrahim Wahabby’s — seems he fell off his donkey on his way back from seeing the bandit! Munireh told Salim to tell us. She followed them to the

rendezvous, using her sheep as a camouflage. She says Manning handed over some money, so I presume he bought the 'Golden Box' right enough. He was going right back to Jerusalem with it evidently, for he was furious when the donkey changed his plans temporarily. Fancied you wouldn't object to a bit of a warning, though, that he's likely to turn up in a couple of days. Dad thinks maybe he is hand in glove with the bandits. What do you say?

We're off now for Beersheba. Expect to have a jolly time if the fleas don't get too lively.

VAIL ATHERTON

So Mr. Manning was coming back soon. She wouldn't think he'd have the face to after her father had turned him down so flatly about that introduction.

'Do you really think he might be in with the bandits, Dad?'

He considered, then shook his head. 'No, I don't. Manning's too fastidious for that sort of thing. I'm sure it was only a fake antique he was after. Wonder how much he finally had to pay for it.' He chuckled, then scratched his ear as he gazed down upon Salim, 'Well, here's this young man still sitting on his heels. Sup-

pose he expects a baksheesh. You don't think we have to put him up for the night, do you?'

But Salim allayed that fear by announcing that he was to return to the Shereef's city house, at which he had already left his donkey. Achmed, the servant there, would receive him as a brother. Was not he, Salim, a servant of the White Sheikh also? And, having received his tip, he kissed his hand to them and departed, shuffling his toes happily in the dust.

After dinner Professor Pollack again brought up the subject of the box. 'You know, ducky, an Arab will sometimes get hold of an antique that looks valuable to him and so he tries to sell it secretly. Maybe it's something of that sort which Mr. Manning's looking out for. If Ibrahim Wahabby deals in fakes he probably knows the market for genuine ones too. Where's that pile of stuff I was going to look through?'

He settled down in the morris chair beside the lamp and was soon so deeply engrossed that he only grunted when Daphne wished him good-night. Presently she heard him call from the next room.

'Hi, daughter, can you come here a minute?'

She wrapped her coat around her for a dressing-gown and obeyed.

‘What do you want? I’m half-undressed.’

He was sitting straight up in the chair, the crumpled notebook open in one hand, making excited motions in the air with his pencil.

‘Come sit on my knee and I’ll show you!’ As she settled herself within the curve of his arm, he held the notebook where the light would shine on it. ‘See that Latin? Well, it’s copied from the manuscript in the monastery. Don must have thought, just as I did, that there was a code in it somewhere, and tried to work it out at his leisure ——’

Daphne, puzzled, looked where his pen tapped. Donald Parrish had scribbled hastily in pencil,

‘Stress antepenult.’

‘What’s that mean?’

‘Have you forgotten that in a Latin word the next to the last syllable is called the penult, and the third from the last the antepenult?’

‘Oh!’ She did remember something of the sort, but what had stupid Latin rules to do with Gilles de Crex?

‘Very well! Suppose that wily Brother Mario did not think it prudent to write down in black and white just where it was Gilles de Crex had hidden his precious relics. He probably wanted them salvaged for his monastery

sooner or later. So he very carefully hid the directions in the text; — so well, in fact, that nobody was bright enough to discover them, or else no one was interested and presently the monks themselves forgot about them. How Parrish discovered them we'll never know. Though after he did, it must have gone easily enough. All he had to do was pick out every word that was stressed on the antepenult or third syllable, like this:

““*Sub-dole*.” Presently, there's another, “*Con-temp-tio*,” and another.’

Daphne read it for him, ““*Col-lo-quim*.” But I don't see ——’

‘You will! Take out those three accented syllables and read them separately, and what do you have?’

‘*Sub-temp-lo*,’ she read slowly. ‘I don't — why, yes, I do! That means “Under the temple,” doesn't it?’

‘It does! And how I wish it wasn't night so I could go right over to the monastery and get the whole thing! Now I have the key, it ought to be a comparatively simple matter ——’

‘And then?’ Daphne's eyes widened.

‘*Then*, unless I'm very much mistaken, we'll know where that crusader loot was left, which Don Parrish was after when those Moslems

chased him! For one thing, sure, he didn't actually have it or he would never have abandoned it. I know Don!

'Do you think anything will really be there?' Daphne was growing excited herself.

'You can't tell. Of course, the Crusaders may have smuggled most of it away or thieves may have stolen it. And possibly there never was anything — but I can't believe it somehow! Not after Don's optimism and even Père Clément's — Anyway, we'll have to hope for the best.'

'Oh, *Father!*' Daphne cuddled closer to him. 'Won't it be *grand* if you do find something, the way they did in King Tut's tomb? I hope nobody's stolen it, Daddy. You don't think' — she twisted around to face him — 'that golden box Mr. Manning's got could be part of it? You said yourself that Arabs often steal things and sell them.'

Her father rumbled his hair thoughtfully, but after a minute he shook his head. 'It couldn't be, I believe. Too much of a coincidence, ducky. There are so many antiques being peddled around Palestine, you see. Anyway, we've got to take our chances, and I can't help feeling, in spite of everything, that they're pretty good. I'll go over to the monastery to-

morrow, and perhaps the next day — if nothing turns up — I'll go and hunt for the place itself.'

'But Dad' — Daphne looked worried — 'Isn't it dangerous? I don't want anybody to chase you the way they did Dr. Parrish.'

'Oh, there's no danger of that since the British came in. Things are quite different now.'

Daphne slid off his knee and hugged her coat around her. 'Then I want to go too! I'd adore to see something really being excavated. Please, Daddy, let me come.'

'I certainly shall, daughter.' He beamed at her. 'Now run along to bed or you'll be catching cold first thing you know.'

When Daphne fell asleep that night, her dreams were full of knights in armor and Salims in cocky red fezes and once Mr. Manning walked through them, carrying a golden box, to which he had lost the key.

CHAPTER XII

CRUSADER'S CROSS . . .

Two mornings later they started for the Crusaders' stables. Daphne was so excited that she could scarcely eat her breakfast. All her doubts had evaporated. She was absolutely sure now of success.

'If Mr. Manning's here when we get back, won't he be surprised, though?' She could not help chuckling, as she waited impatiently on the veranda for her father to join her.

'My dear,' he warned her, coming out with his pockets bulging mysteriously, 'you'd better not count your chickens before they're hatched.' But he said it with a laugh that showed he too was optimistic. 'Are you dressed warm enough? It will be cold as a tomb down there.'

A tomb indeed! Dank air rushed up to meet them as they left the brilliancy of the day outside; dank air and the damp, mouldy smell that she always associated with cellars. Daphne paused for one backward glance at the Mosque of Omar, shining behind them in the sun. Then she followed her father down the steep

steps into the eternal gloom of underground. A tomb indeed, but such a tomb! For there were buried here, in these vast galleries that stretched away on all sides into darkness, centuries dead and long ago forgotten, ages so long crumbled into dust, you doubted that they ever had existed; histories, unwritten, unremembered!

As Daphne's eyes became accustomed to the gloom, she seemed to see dim shapes that wavered in and out among the shadowy pillars. Were they ghosts?—the ghosts of former evil years, doomed for their sins to haunt these chilly aisles forever? She drew her coat more closely round her, and found her fingers shaking.

'Hold on to my arm, daughter.' Her father had snapped on his flashlight, and it made a cheerful circle on the ground at their feet. 'Too bad we couldn't get any tapers. I was sure some of those Arabs outside would have them for sale.'

'Oughtn't we to have a guide?' she suggested as he moved forward, keeping the light bobbing just ahead of him, as a blind man taps his way along with his cane. 'What'd happen if we got lost?'

'Oh, we'd find our way out again. These

galleries don't extend very far. They're not like the catacombs. And I've been down here before. You don't need to worry. Besides, I don't want a native ——'

'I feel like Theseus trying to find his way through the labyrinth,' giggled Daphne, trying to keep her spirits up.

'Wonder if his clue was any slenderer than ours.' Her father paused at an intervening corridor and sent the eye of his flashlight peering this way and that. 'Hm! This must be where we turn. Keep close to me, daughter.'

They left the main aisle and went steadily farther underground, through an unfrequented part of the galleries. The dampness was penetrating; the stale odor of imprisoned air was in their nostrils. Daphne's feet, even in her overshoes, were getting numb with cold.

'What did they build this place for, anyway?' she asked presently, staring upwards into a blankness which must somewhere contain a ceiling.

'It's the substructure of the temple area. I thought I told you. The hill had to be made level on top before the old temple could be built. When the Crusaders came, they used it for a stable. There's an underground passage which comes out near the Virgin's Fountain.

Shouldn't wonder if that's how Parrish managed to elude the mob. Watch your step! This is a bumpy place!

On and on . . .

'We must be pretty nearly under the mosque by this time.'

Her father's voice echoed back and forth along the lonely aisles as if other travelers wandered unseen near by, and answered him. But when the last echo died, there was silence again, more profound than ever. It had been only the ghosts chattering.

Something of the same thought must have occurred to the Professor, for he said:

'Do you remember Ulysses' visit to the Shades and how they crowded round wanting to know of the world they'd left behind?'

Yes, Daphne remembered. She was, as her father said, like Ulysses, and the ghosts were pressing close to her, stretching out invisible yearning hands, trying to reach her with their wistful voices that were only thin echoes in her mortal ears. And with the fancy all that strange, uncanny dread which had oppressed her seemed to vanish. Wouldn't it be wonderful to step across that mystic barrier which separated her world from theirs; to call them by name; Samuel and Saul; David and Jona-

than; — a familiar, ghostly throng with somewhere, somewhere, on the farthest fringes of it, certain mail-clad figures who bore the Cross upon their shields! Baldwin, Richard Cœur de Lion, Eleanor of Aquitaine . . . yes, and Gilles de Crex also, who near a thousand years before had stood upon this very spot! This very spot!

A thrill of understanding ran through Daphne. This very spot! His eyes had seen these selfsame stones! Why, if this were so, history was not a dead thing after all, but living fact, like the modern world around her. To-day slipped back a step to Yesterday. Yesterday? Why, yesterday, Kirstie and Beulah had gone home! And Yesterday, a Knight of Normandy had sped along these gloomy passages seeking some secret spot to lay his plunder in, until he should return to fair far France!

And now they had come, her father and herself, to bring it out again to light — after these many, many years. After even Don Parrish had failed! She could hardly wait! And she remembered suddenly a story she had heard her father tell of some one who found upon the sand, inside an old Egyptian tomb, the footprints of those who laid the Pharaoh's body

there four thousand years and more ago! She remembered the look on his face as he told it, the tone of his voice — she hadn't understood then why such a thing had moved him so; but she did now!

She hugged his arm against her quickly. 'I'll bet Lord Carnarvon wasn't a bit more excited over finding Tut-ankh-amen than I am this minute!'

'Are you, ducky?' Her father gave her a pleased, though somewhat abstracted, smile.

He had slowed up and was waving his light across the darkness ahead. Walls leaped out at them blocking further progress. They were at the end of a blind alley. Daphne noticed with surprise that the supporting pillars were shorter, and that above, a ceiling had emerged at last from the shadows. It was so close that when she raised her arm she could lay her hand flat upon its clammy surface.

'This ought to be the place!' said her father anxiously.

Up and down, over the walls, the pillars, the ceiling, went the circle of light. Daphne held her breath. What if they had made a mistake? What if they were in the wrong corridor? What if there were other spots so like

the proper one that, hunt though they might, they never found it?

'A-ah!' His long-drawn exclamation caused her to breathe again. 'We're getting warm anyway. Here's a Crusader's Cross.'

The light steadied upon a gray stone on whose surface Daphne dimly described faint scratches that would scarcely attract the eye of one who was not looking for them.

'Somebody was in here once — that's sure ——' Her father produced a hammer from his pocket and began to tap here and there on the smooth stone. 'Doesn't sound hollow, though ——' His light began to travel once more, and he went on tapping, tapping. Daphne's heart seemed to keep time to it — beat — beat — beat, beat, beat. The circle of light picked up the Cross again. There was something uncannily wise about that light; you had an impression that it was moving by its own volition — a ghost, perhaps, which had offered its services.

Once Daphne stiffened. Was that some one coming? No, the silence was as enveloping as ever. Her imagination was only playing tricks on her.

She brought her attention back to the spotlight. Along the bottom of the wall it traveled

and came to a halt around an irregular block of stone set between its fellows in the unmortared masonry.

'That stone looks loose to me ——' Tap! tap! 'It sounds hollow, too.' Her father's voice shook as he told her. 'Hold the light for me, Daphne.'

He groped again in his pocket and withdrew an iron wedge. 'Hold the light steady now.'

He worked it into a crack, and hit the other end a careful blow with the hammer; then again, harder. Daphne distinctly saw the stone move.

She dropped on her knees beside him, clawing at the other side to help. But the block was so smooth and fitted so neatly into its place that she could not get a purchase on it.

'It's like trying to pick a piece out of a puzzle,' her father said between his teeth. 'Hold the light nearer, please!'

And the circle shrank to a radius scarcely larger than the stone.

'What were you listening to?' he asked her abruptly as the stone moved again. 'I'll try the other side now — this'll have to be done evenly.' He talked under his breath, as if he were thinking aloud.

'I keep hearing things,' said Daphne, eyes intent on the stone.

'Do you?' — absently. 'Might be tourists. We've been down here quite a while. Probably won't come this far, though. Look out!'

The stone slid suddenly out of its place and thudded on the ground. Daphne tipped over backwards to save her toes! She righted herself at once and bent breathlessly beside her father to peer into the gaping hole that was like the cavity left by an extracted tooth. For a minute neither of them spoke. In the silence she could hear his breath, quick and hoarse.

At last! At last! They were nearer to the discovery than Parrish himself had been! And there was no infuriated mob to interrupt this time — only — There was a sudden movement near by. Without warning the light was knocked out of Daphne's grasp. She distinctly felt a hand brush hers. *Some one else was in the darkness with them!*

CHAPTER XIII

...AND BROKEN BLADE

‘DAPHNE! The light! What’s wrong?’ Her father’s voice was sharp with alarm and anger. ‘You pushed me ——’

She saw a faint glow at her feet; luckily the fall had not snapped it off. With trembling fingers she groped for it, expecting every minute to feel an invisible hand close on hers. ‘Father, it wasn’t I — there’s someone else ——’

‘Who’s here? Speak up!’

‘Oh, it’s you, Professor,’ said a familiar voice, and out of the darkness appeared the face of Mr. Manning, pale under a bandage that half concealed his curly hair.

The Professor at last broke the stunned silence.

‘What do you mean by this? Explain yourself, sir!’

Mr. Manning glanced from him to Daphne. Sheepishness was in his face; sullenness too.

‘If you give me time, I’ll tell you,’ he said sulkily. ‘I had no idea it was you. I thought

some Arab was down here thieving, and I got excited, that was all.' And he looked at the gaping hole.

'I don't understand you!'

Manning gave a short laugh. 'Oh, yes, you do! You got what you came for! Why don't you take everything, though, while you're about it? — Here ——' and he flung something on the ground with a disappointed, angry gesture. It was a knife-blade, broken and rusty.

Daphne stooped for it while her father repeated in a stupefied voice, 'Take — everything?'

'Yes!' Manning paused, looking around with narrowed eyes. 'Haven't you got the ——?'

'*I* have nothing!' retorted the Professor. 'You pushed me away before I had time to look ——'

For a minute they glared at each other, wary, suspicious, and Daphne stared at each in turn and at the broken blade on her palm.

At last Mr. Manning shrugged. 'Well *I* certainly haven't got it! Look for yourself, if you don't believe me!' He flung his hands wide.

Professor Pollack eyed him an instant in silence, then suddenly he knelt before the open hole. Daphne saw his arm disappear as far as

the shoulder. It seemed hours before he drew it out again — empty.

‘No,’ he said to the other. ‘There’s nothing there!’

‘That rascal did double-cross me, then!’ Manning grumbled to himself. He grinned, though painfully.

‘Guess we might as well cry quits, Professor.’

‘Again — I don’t understand you!’ While Daphne stared at him with tragic and indignant eyes. So this was what all their hopes had come to! A rusty, broken knife-blade that whoever had preceded them hadn’t thought worth stealing! The only consolation was that Mr. Manning was as disappointed as they. But was he? She thought of the box he had bargained for as he answered, irritably:

‘Isn’t it perfectly obvious that we both came for the same thing? And that we’re both of us left flat? Oh, I’ve had my theory of what Don Parrish was looking for, just as you had yours! If you’d been shrewd, you’d have guessed that long ago. You can’t blame me for being close-mouthed about it, can you? And now Fate has tricked us both, so why not admit it? It’s the sporting thing to do.’

The Professor brushed this aside.

‘How did you know I was coming here to-day?’

'I didn't, or I'd have been here yesterday, head or no head!' retorted Mr. Manning.

'How did you find out about this place?'

'I beg of you!' Mr. Manning waved a hand. 'Professional secrets, Professor.'

'And what did you come for, anyway?' Daphne broke in, unable to hold back longer, for the more she thought of it, the surer she was that her earlier suspicions were right — 'when you'd already bought the golden box?'

Mr. Manning's eyelashes flickered. She had taken him by surprise, but he recovered himself at once and said coldly:

'My dear young lady — I don't know what you refer to! I haven't bought any box. I expected to find it — just as your father did!' So the golden box *had* been here once! He admitted it. 'The bandit told him all about it' — she turned to her father triumphantly.

'How does the bandit come into this, Manning? I thought you told me Parrish kept it a dead secret!'

Mr. Manning shrugged his shoulders.

'Better ask your daughter, Dr. Pollack. She seems to know all about it. Though I was under the impression that it was *you* who encountered the bandits, not I!'

Urrh! If she had been a lion she'd have

eaten him up. She gave him a murderous glance as he went on, an injured note creeping into his voice.

‘Do you think I’d have come down here in *this* condition if I didn’t think there was something to come for? I learned by accident about this place. And I’ve been left just as much in the dark as you are. And whether you believe it or not, that’s the truth!’

There was such a ring of sincerity in his voice that Daphne, in spite of herself, felt that he meant it. Complete silence followed. The galleries were very still. The frightened ghosts had shrunk back into their shadows again. At last the Professor shook himself.

‘Well,’ he said, ‘there’s no good standing here arguing about it! We’ll only catch our death of cold.’

He took Daphne gently by the elbow. ‘Go ahead, Manning.’

‘Here’s that knife-blade.’ Daphne held it out to her father by the point.

‘Oh!’ He took it, turning it over, and finally with a baffled sigh thrust it into his pocket.

In silence they made their way along the dim corridors. In silence they climbed into the sunshine again.

The Mosque of Omar still stood as they had

left it, its eight sides glittering, its blue dome warm against a bluer heaven. Funny to find it just the same as ever! Daphne would have been less surprised if it had disappeared entirely, so strong was her impression of having come, after centuries, from another world!

Yet, the pigeons that circled up above the eucalyptus trees; the old dervish washing his feet yonder at the fountain; the bewhiskered gate-man, his hand already waiting for bak-sheesh — these were all — all unchanged.

When they were out in the dimmer city streets again, her father turned on an impulse to the other.

‘You’d better come out to the house, hadn’t you? You look rather done out.’

‘No, thanks,’ Mr. Manning drew his hat down over his bandage. ‘It’s nothing, only a cut on my head when my donkey threw me. I’ve got a pressing engagement, thanks just the same.’

Yet he did not seem in a great hurry, for Daphne, glancing back, saw that he was standing quite still, looking after them with an odd smile.

After that the mellow April days passed one by one, a rosary of golden beads slipping

through the slow fingers of Time. The fig tree in the corner of the garden covered itself with curious-shaped leaves; the gray hills were spread with little rugs of flowers, in preparation for the Easter season.

‘You’d never think it was the same country.’ Daphne still remembered that awful January day when she had stood shivering on the station platform and watched the rain blow along the hills. She believed she could almost grow to love Palestine if it were always April there and if — she sighed — things had only turned out as they’d expected them to!

Since that futile morning’s search below the temple area her father had been more silent than she had ever known him. He would lapse into abstracted reveries from which he would emerge with a hopeless sigh, straighten his stooped shoulders and, smiling at her, make a conscious effort to be his usual whimsical self again. Sometimes, when not too deeply occupied with her own self-pity, Daphne found his attempts at playfulness pathetic.

‘I suppose he set his heart on finding that box just as I did on going to Italy,’ she said to herself.

But, as he tried to explain to her, his disappointment might have far more serious re-

sults than hers. For the University had decided to finance his stay out here simply on his conviction that Parrish's untimely end had cut off an important piece of research at its climax. Certainly, it would be justified in expecting some results pretty soon! And if he had nothing to show for all his optimism ——; but he always stopped at that point, leaving Daphne with a strange sinking of heart to ponder over possibilities. Why, maybe the University wouldn't want him any more, and they would have to leave the town which had been home as long as she could remember. Not to go back to Alden? Not to know the red brick house was waiting for her among the maples? It was something she couldn't think about in spite of the times she had envied Gerry who lived mostly from city to city.

'But, Daddy, it must turn up sometime, don't you think?' she had cried. 'Maybe you didn't find the right place?'

Oh, yes, he had — there was no doubt of it. He had gone back, time and again. And always the directions had led him back to the same corner, the same half-obliterated Cross, the same wall, which, in spite of the most painstaking search, yielded no trace of hiding-place other than the one which he had already

found. There was only one conclusion to come to; — the cache had been rifled by some one else — unless, of course, you assumed that there had never been anything there to rifle. Had Dr. Pollack been alone in his search, he might have been tempted to think so, but, with Mr. Manning so hot upon the trail too, such a conclusion was, of course, impossible. No, some one had simply been there before them. But who?

‘I have an idea,’ he told Daphne more than once, ‘that if we knew how that broken knife got in we’d solve the mystery.’

‘But isn’t it an old one, Daddy? Maybe Gilles de Crex himself ——’

‘Oh, it’s a Saracen knife right enough, but that doesn’t say the man who owned it was Saracen! I have a feeling that there’s more to this business than appears on the surface. It seems incredible that any one should just have happened upon that secret cache unless he knew something about it beforehand. I’d give a lot to interview that bandit, I can tell you.’

‘Vail says he got away. He says it’s doubtful if they ever find him now. Maybe the knife was his and he broke it trying to dig the stone out.’

‘Maybe so — in fact that’s the obvious ex-

planation, and yet, if I didn't know that Don Parrish died of pneumonia, I believe I'd suspect he'd been murdered. That knife was broken in some sort of desperate struggle. It looks as if it had been wrenched violently from its socket. I'd like to know what Manning thinks! Wonder what's become of him, by the way?' For Salim, on the Athertons' return, had reported that Mr. Manning had left Ain Karim again, very suddenly.

Daphne and her father were discussing all these things for the thousandth time as they made their way one evening toward the Colony House on the Ramallah Road. She had been pleased at the invitation for dinner. It offered a happy variation from meals which had become more monotonous than ever with no Beulah and Kirstie there to take her mind off them.

A little while later she stood behind her chair and watched the sisters bustle about placing such dainties on the long tables as Daphne had not seen since she left America. A strange sense, almost of peace, filled her. All her life, she thought, she would remember this place and this hour. She would be able to close her eyes and see it as vividly as she did now.

'God is great, and God is good
And we thank him for this food!'

The chant of the Grace rose and fell; floated out through open windows into a fragrant court where roses and verbenas and heliotrope and stock bloomed in the darkness; and was borne heavenward on a wind that swung the passion flowers lightly on their vines.

‘Give us, Lord, our daily-y bread . . .’

‘Next Friday is the Feast of the Passover,’ Anna Carlson, opposite, told Daphne over the tomato bisque. ‘Would you like to see it? We have an invitation from some Hebrew friends ——’

Yes, Daphne would like it immensely. It would be something different to do.

So on Good Friday evening she followed Anna through a Jewish suburb of the city. At intervals as they walked, she caught the sound of muffled chanting, minor and mysterious, haunting the velvety Eastern night. It thrilled her oddly.

At last Anna stopped and knocked at a door.

‘Shalôm! Shalôm! Peace! Peace!’ A smiling dark-eyed woman greeted them, as she ushered them into a small room where on a long table brass candlesticks upheld their seven mystic points of flame. Around it bearded

faces and black skull caps nodded rhythmically over open ritual books.

Daphne wished she could understand the words they sang; — that little boy at the end who chanted as lustily as the men, could he actually read all those funny black characters in his book? Daphne thought of Beulah who could chatter Arabic like a native. Even the children over here were more accomplished than she, who could not so much as speak French fluently. She didn't like it — it made her feel too ignorant.

Perhaps if it had not been for that unpleasant feeling of inferiority Daphne might not have paused the next morning when she saw her father absorbed in a book of those same odd characters.

'It's a Hebrew Bible, dear.' He looked up as she hung over the back of his chair curiously.

'I don't see how you ever read them!'

He smiled. 'Oh, it isn't so bad after you've once learned the alphabet and remember to start at the right of the page instead of the left. Want to try it?'

He looked a little surprised when she promptly settled herself on the arm of his chair, but he made no comment on her unusual

enthusiasm for ancient things. Turning to the back of the book — or to be more exact the front — he pointed out the first letter in the alphabet — Aleph. By lunch time she had learned to recognize half of them and was inordinately proud of her accomplishment.

‘I’m going to learn them all,’ she told him, ‘so that when Beulah talks to me in Arabic I can spout Hebrew at her.’

‘A laudable ambition, I must say,’ her father twinkled, but he promised: ‘All right, as soon as you know the alphabet I’ll show you the first chapter of Genesis. Beginners always start on that.’

Perhaps if she hadn’t had so little else to do those next weeks, her interest in Hebrew would have waned as quickly as it began. But as it was, she worked at it so faithfully that even her father was astounded and gratified.

‘You’re a chip of the old block, after all,’ he said when under his guidance she managed to pronounce almost every word on the first page of Genesis, and from the way he said it Daphne realized rather guiltily that he must have often doubted it before.

‘Huh!’ She pretended not to be greatly impressed with herself. ‘After you know the letters the *reading* isn’t hard, and if you want

to know what it *says*, all you've got to do is use your Bible for a trot.'

'Well' — her father tried to take the wind out of her sails a bit — 'when you've studied Hebrew as long as I have, my child, you'll find it isn't as easy as you think!'

And so what with memorizing new words every morning and sight-seeing with her father in the afternoon, or going for long, windy walks with Vail and Lady Clare; what with the Sacred Fire at Easter and a thousand twinkling lights at Ramadan — the first of May, long waited for, and long dreaded, went by before she knew it and she was packing to visit Kirstie and Beulah in their Galilee home.

'Take along what you need for the summer, too,' her father ordered. 'We shan't be back here again till fall. I hope we'll find a place in the Lebanons somewhere, or maybe on Mount Carmel ——'

'Make it Carmel,' said Vail when he heard it. 'Father's to meet some High Official that's due at Haifa in July.' And he added, as if carelessly, 'It'll be beastly quiet down here, after you're gone. I'm going to miss you no end, you know.'

The regret in his voice was gratifying. Daphne looked at him, as he walked beside

her, his fair English face lifted to the wind, his one hand laid restrainingly on Lady Clare's head. Vail wasn't half bad when you knew him. But then, he'd lost a good deal of his British arrogance since he'd come. She guessed Palestine did some people a lot of good.

On a soft day in early May they started. Vail appeared at the last minute to say good-bye.

'I was afraid I had missed you,' he gasped, sweeping his cap off his hot forehead. He looked at Dr. Pollack. 'Father says, sir, if you are planning to stay on Carmel this summer, perhaps we could arrange a few weeks there too. *And,*' he went on, after the Professor declared he had already decided on Carmel, 'what do you think? They caught our bandit *over in Transjordan* — while they were out after another fellow too. You'll never guess who gave him away — it was Mr. Manning!'

'Can you beat that?' mused the Professor as the wagon topped the ridge of mountains that are roundabout Jerusalem, and rattled cheerfully down toward Ramallah. 'Manning's got his revenge; which proves without doubt that he must have been badly tricked some way or other. Well, they do say that he laughs best who laughs last, and it looks as if Manning had the last turn.'

CHAPTER XIV

THE BEDOUIN LAUGHS

‘If any mail comes for me, you may open it, ducky,’ the Professor had said when he left Tiberias in company with Dr. Laird for the ruins of Cæsarea Philippi far off at the foot of Hermon.

So now, on a warm mid-May morning, Daphne obediently opened an envelope addressed in a queer cramped hand, and read within above Père Clément’s signature: ‘Monsieur le Professeur, I find this very strange! Do you not also?’ A strip of paper fluttered down to the floor, and Daphne, picking it up, saw it was a clipping from a local Jerusalem newspaper. She looked at the headline, and sat down hard in her astonishment. For she had seen:

AMAZING FIND ANNOUNCED TO WORLD

Mawson Manning claims

Old Byzantine Box contains

HOLY GRAIL

No wonder Daphne gasped as she read it.

So he *had* lied to them that morning underground! Oh, he was clever all right — making believe he was as disappointed as they! Daphne groaned, then paused considering. But what had he come for at all if he had lied? And why had he waited for such a long time to elapse before announcing his discovery? No, more likely, he had found the box later. And across her mind there flashed a sudden picture — of Mr. Manning looking after them that day as they went slowly homeward — an odd smile upon his face. It must have occurred to him then where the box was — pushed away back, maybe, or else there had been another stone inside the hole, which opened, if you knew the trick, on a deeper one. Anyway, he had gone back alone and found the box. Yet, why had he waited so long to say so? If she had found the Holy Grail, she'd have told everybody at once! The Holy Grail! — The cup from which Christ drank! That night at the American Colony some one had spoken of it as having been found at Antioch or one like it. It seemed ironical for Mr. Manning to find the Grail which knights like Galahad had hunted for!

She glanced through the clipping again.

'The cup itself is plain, but is encased in a richly ornamented silver chalice, bearing a Greek inscription around its brim. Mr. Manning, when interviewed yesterday' (so he was back in town, was he?), 'told this reporter that he had first suspected its existence through the chance reading of an old Crusader record . . .'

Daphne looked up — that old Crusader record! Why, she could recite most of it still; — she ran over the words quickly,

'We hid . . . certain Relics of the Saints among which was a very ancient chalice . . .'

And Mr. Manning had walked right off and found it hidden in a golden box!

It sounded incredible, but incredible things did happen sometimes in archæology. That was the romance of it, her father said. There was Troy, for instance, and the Labyrinth of the Minotaur at Crete.

From the veranda Kirstie's voice hailed her. She answered vaguely, 'In a minute!' — her mind still a bitter chaos of thoughts.

She'd love to know how Mr. Manning had managed it. She'd just love to know! Of course, it was plain enough that he had borrowed that book and translated it while ambulating around beyond Jordan. And he had come

back to the monastery to see if he could get any more clues there — just as her father had done. But Père Clément had balked him, and from then on, it wasn't plain at all! Why had he gone to Ibrahim Wahabby, and where did the bandit come in? Perhaps, when the latter was brought back to Jerusalem, he might be induced to tell. And why had Mr. Manning followed him to Transjordan? It was more hopelessly mixed every minute! Perhaps when her father rode in to-morrow night he could unravel it. But oh, how disappointed he would be! For up until now there had been always a conviction that he would find that box sooner or later. And now that horrid, sneaky Mr. Manning had done it. How unjust! How terribly unjust Life was!

‘Daffy, aren't you ready yet?’ Beulah's voice broke in impatiently this time. ‘It'll be awful hot if we wait much longer.’

‘All right!’ Daphne scrambled to her feet, tucking the clipping back into the envelope. There was no use having any one ask a lot of questions about it, though if it had been good news she would have proclaimed it from the housetops without scruple.

‘I mustn't think of it!’ she told herself resolutely as she raced with Beulah and Kirstie

down to the beach where Ali Baba — Beulah had named him that because his own name was so unpronounceable — curled his toes over the prow of a boat and chattered with a neighbor as he waited.

‘I’m sorry I was late,’ she panted, and thought again. ‘I WON’T let it spoil the day! We’ve counted on having this picnic for so long!’

‘Ali Baba’s the biggest gossip,’ laughed Kirstie, as he stopped in mid-sentence and salaamed. ‘He knows all the scandal in town. He’s been talking all morning about some one’s being arrested for stealing — guess he didn’t mind waiting for us a little bit.’

‘This is our favoritest spot,’ said Beulah, as, nearly an hour later, Ali Baba grounded the boat gently on a little white beach. ‘I remember coming here for picnics as long as I can remember anything.’

And Kirstie added, ‘It doesn’t usually take so long to get to it — when there’s a breeze we come skimming down.’

‘It’s a queer day, isn’t it?’ Daphne teetered the length of the boat and jumped out on shore. ‘It looks as if it were holding its breath and waiting for something to happen.’

She shaded her eyes and looked across the

lake, whose water was like a piece of satin, sleek and smooth and shiny. Beyond it, the high cliffs, over which the unfortunate Gadarene pigs had once plunged into the sea, were mere mirages glimmering on the yellow haze. Heat rose in waves, from the dry hills, from the glittering sand, from the sultry lake. Even the sky looked scorched.

‘Guess there’ll be an earthquake,’ said Beulah cheerfully, sprawling ashore after her.

But Kirstie interposed. ‘Of course not! It’s the sirocco that does it. There may be a thunderstorm this afternoon, but it’s too early for earthquakes. You know that, Beulah!’

‘Well,’ said Beulah, not in the least suppressed, ‘we’ll be lots safer out of doors, anyway, if there is one.’

Ali Baba carried the wicker basket full of lunch up a faint goat-path toward the romantic remains of an old castle. The brook-bed below was dry now, but underground there was still enough moisture to keep green the oleanders which crowded against the empty walls. Ivy and morning-glory trailed their leaves over the ancient battlements and entirely hid the jutting tower which was the one intact corner of a castle which had once stood four-square.

'Did the Romans build it?' Daphne knew that the lake had been a favorite resort in the time of the Cæsars.

But Kirstie said, 'Wait and you'll see.'

Inside a slender arch Ali Baba set the basket down and salaaming withdrew to his boat where he would wrap his *kuffieh* tightly about his head and sleep the hours away until his young mistresses were ready to return.

Beulah, who had started to explore the weed-grown court within the crumbling ivied walls, pranced back to regard the basket with hopeful eyes.

'Is it time to eat yet? I'm awful hungry! Well, then, I can have a drink, can't I? I feel as if I'd been eating soda crackers!'

Their mouths all felt that way, and Kirstie rummaged around for the thermos bottle full of lemonade.

'Maybe it's still in the boat ——'

But Ali Baba, being hailed frantically, reported that it wasn't. He had brought all that was given to him.

'Then,' said Kirstie, 'it must still be sitting on the kitchen chair where I put it until the cook got ready to pack the sandwiches. What on earth are we going to do?' She was almost wailing. 'And there's only one orange apiece.

It's the first time we've ever had a thermos too. Dad bought it for Mother in Jerusalem!'

'Why can't Ali Baba go back for it?' suggested Daphne. 'It wouldn't take him much more than an hour and a half and probably not that long now that the boat's light. We could make the oranges do till then, and sort of eat easy, until he got back.'

But Ali Baba when approached was strangely reluctant. Kirstie expostulated with him while Beulah upset everything in the basket in the vain hope that the thermos was still lurking in a secret corner.

'He said he was told to take good care of us, and that since there was a robbery in the town ——' Kirstie broke off impatiently, 'As if that were an excuse! He's just too lazy to make that hot trip again! If that isn't like a native ——!'

At last he gave in and departed shaking his head. Presently they saw him send the boat skimming townward with long strokes. 'Doesn't row as if he minded the heat,' observed Daphne, shading her eyes. 'It looks sort of dark down there at the other end of the lake — hope it won't storm before he gets back. What shall we do till then?'

'Should you like to explore the castle?'

asked Kirstie, who was slightly out of sorts because of her own stupidity. 'Here's an orange. Bulie, you peel it and divide it in three, will you?'

'Let's see if our garden's still there.' Bulie dug her thumb expertly into the orange rind as they made their way through the high undergrowth which covered the ancient stones of the court until in a shady, sheltered corner, where one wall joined the tower, Kirstie dropped on her knees crying:

'Here they are!'

She pushed the weeds aside, and Daphne, leaning over her, saw a straggling patch of snap-dragons — pale Northern exiles amid the Oriental red of wild poppies.

'Did you plant them yourselves?' she cried in surprise.

'Oh, no; Mother found them the first time we ever had a picnic here. We've never seen them growing wild anywhere else. We think some homesick lady brought the seed with her from England long, long ago. This was a Crusader castle, you see. It's a lovely idea, isn't it? — but sort of sad, too! Whoever planted them has been dead so long that people have forgotten all about her, but her snap-dragons still bloom on and on.'

Snap-dragons! Daphne cupped her hands wonderingly about a stalk. Old England rooted here upon the hills of Galilee! And To-day so close to Yesterday that a patch of little snap-dragons made the link between.

‘Bulie!’ Kirstie lifted her head suddenly and looked around for her sister, ‘what are you staring at?’

‘Nothing.’ Beulah had been looking intently through the narrow door which was the only entrance to the tower, but now she turned and joined them. ‘I thought I saw a funny shadow and I stopped to see what made it, but I guess it was nothing but the sun shining on a lizard.’

‘A lizard doesn’t have a shadow!’ sniffed Kirstie. ‘You have such silly ideas, Bulie!’

Beulah surveyed her sister in surprise. Kirstie’s tone was quite short.

‘I don’t see anything *bad* in imagining a shadow, Kirstie,’ she said, preparing for an argument, but Daphne intervened.

‘I guess it was a ghost you saw, Bulie. Every castle has a ghost, you know. I’ll bet this one’s the lady who planted the snap-dragons; come on and let’s look.’

‘You’re just as silly as Beulah!’ said Kirstie. ‘Of course, there isn’t such a thing as a ghost

in there, but if there was, I don't see what you'd want to see it for!

'Oh, come along, 'Fraidy.' Daphne was determined now. 'I'll take care of you — I'm not a bit afraid of ghosts since that day we went down under the temple area. They seemed so — so sort of lonely, poor things.'

'I'll go with you, Daffy.' Beulah was gratified that Daphne took her part. 'I'm not afraid of ghosts either, 'specially when I've got somebody to talk to.'

'I didn't say I was scared either!' from Kirstie.

'Then come along.' Daphne marched up to the door and stepped inside. Thus challenged, Kirstie followed, a bit flushed of face, and Beulah squeezed in between them.

'I can't see anything!' said Daphne.

After the brilliance outdoors the interior seemed very dim. Only in one place did a shaft of light coming in through a small window cut slantwise through the shadows. Gradually, as their eyes grew accustomed to the gloom, an uneven rubbish-strewn floor appeared, and mouldy walls, and above a low vaulted ceiling. On the far side of it there had once been, apparently, a small trapdoor which earthquakes, or the destructive pro-

cess of time, had widened into an irregular hole.

‘We climbed up there once,’ said Kirstie, ‘but Father said it wasn’t safe. There used to be another room above it, but that’s all fallen in.’

‘I’m going to look.’ Daphne picked her way across the rubbish, Beulah beside her, and Kirstie behind, still reluctant. What had struck her, anyway? Kirstie wasn’t usually so scary! She had been all right till Beulah mentioned that shadow.

Daphne halted directly beneath the hole. She stepped on a fallen block of stone near by, and found herself almost on a level with it. She tilted her head to peer through; — and every drop of blood in her veins ran cold with horror. For staring down at her was a face so menacing, so deadly, that the breath died in her throat and she could not utter a sound.

‘Daphne, come down, what is it?’ Kirstie in alarm sprang toward her. There was a metallic click and Daphne found herself facing the barrel of a gun.

Behind her there was a squeal and a scramble and Kirstie screaming:

‘Bulie, stop, he’ll shoot you!’

The man spat a sharp threat at them in Arabic.

'He says he'll shoot if we go to the door. Oh, why did we come in?'

Kirstie's wail brought Daphne out of her trance. Trembling, she groped backward for Kirstie's hand, and, as their fingers met, the comfort of a human touch helped to clear her fogged senses. She thought: 'We must keep our heads! Whatever we do, we must keep our heads!' Maybe they ought to talk too — she had read somewhere that conversation will distract the most ferocious-minded criminal. The trouble was, she couldn't think of anything to say! It would be difficult to make polite observations on the weather to the point of a gun. The weather made her think of Ali Baba. Oh, if they only hadn't sent him off! He hadn't wanted to go, either; — he must have suspected something!

There was a slight movement above them. The man had shifted his position, was dragging himself forward along the edge of the broken ceiling. He moved painfully. Once he raised his head and the solitary shaft of sunlight fell athwart his face. It was wolf-like and reckless, and white under the tangled mat of his hair, and — Daphne was suddenly quite sure — this wasn't the first time she had seen it! Where — ? Suddenly Beulah, behind

her, gasped and whispered, 'Why, that's the bandit! — the one I saw at Ain Karim!'

The bandit! No wonder he had seemed familiar — that face had been impressed upon her memory down there by the Jericho road! But Vail had said he had been captured and was being brought to Jerusalem. He must have escaped along the way. Daphne gave him a glance in which curiosity was mingled with her fear. How often she had wished for a chance to interview this very fellow, but she had never dreamed it would be thrust upon her like this! The fact that she knew him, however, for some strange reason, seemed to relieve her anxiety. She thought rapidly. The name of the Shereef Al'an which had been so potent on the Jericho Road — might it not avail again? She asked Kirstie, who answered:

'I don't know' — doubtfully — 'he looks sort of determined to me. I'm 'most afraid to try.'

But after a few minutes she began timidly. He retorted, scowling.

'He says' — Kirstie sounded quite hopeless — 'he cares for no foreign dog! That a man who has been burned once trusts no fire again.'

A despairing silence settled upon the three. In it Daphne could hear her wrist watch tick.

She shifted her weight to her other foot and closed her eyes a minute. She was tired and dizzy, standing so rigid on that stone.

'I got pins and needles sticking all over me,' came in Beulah's complaining whisper. 'I'm going to ask him if we can't sit down. I'll say we couldn't run away so easy.' So she raised her voice and asked him.

To their relief he grunted a surly assent, and the three dropped on the ground. From outdoors the heat crept in, as if to suffocate them. How long would it be before Ali Baba came back? And when he did, would he suspect what danger was afoot and go for help before he appeared in the open door and was shot down without mercy? Daphne shuddered. She could only hope some intuition would warn him while there was time. But if he did not save them, what, oh, what, was to become of them?

'Ask him, Kirstie!' If she ever got out of this, she was going to learn Arabic herself, no matter how long or short a time she stayed in Palestine.

The man shrugged, but he deigned to answer. He may have been finding the situation a little monotonous, or he may have wished to enjoy the effect his words would

make on his captives. At any rate he told them. Kirstie translated:

‘He says he is waiting for his friend who went last night to Tiberias for horses on which they will escape to Transjordania. He says he will come at any minute, and then they’ll talk us over. He says we can be sure of one thing — they won’t leave us here to betray them to the soldiers!’

Were they to be kidnaped — or killed? And there was still another desperado who might put in an appearance at any time? Daphne’s heart sank lower. She remembered that Vail had said, that care-free morning they had left Jerusalem — was it years ago? — that the soldiers had nabbed another man and were bringing them both back to Jerusalem. Apparently the two had escaped together.

‘If we swear not to tell, will you let us go?’

He scowled. ‘In the mouth of your race, promises are as so much chaff — to be spit out when the good has been extracted! Am I a fool, to let you go, seeing that I have not scrupled to kill once to escape? Already there is a price on my head!’

He moved angrily, but the scowl became a grimace of pain. Daphne for the first time realized that he was hurt. One leg was doubled

under him. A dark stain had stiffened his skirt. The guard whom he had slain had not died wholly unrevenged!

The man had continued to talk, finding a sullen sort of satisfaction in airing his bitterness.

'If I die,' he said, more than once, 'it will be among my own people under the open sky — not in a filthy Christian prison! By Mohammed the Prophet I have sworn it, and by Mohammed the Prophet *nothing shall stop me!*'

Again despair engulfed them. They drooped against each other, weary and hot and hopeless. Faint, too, with hunger and thirst. Outside by the old arch ants were flocking to the deserted basket. Outside, in a quiet corner, snap-dragons nodded little English heads to each other as they had done year after uneventful year, while untold generations of man struggled and feared and died.

How long yet till Ali was due? Daphne peered at her watch. A half-hour at the very least! And in a half-hour many things might happen. At any minute they might hear the thud of horses' feet. Oh, if Ali would only come first! And she clung to that hope, praying that somehow he would find a way to rescue them!

She raised her head, listening with every sense strained. But she heard nothing. The stillness was oppressive — it was like quiet before a storm. If a storm caught him, Ali Baba would not return for who knew how many hours? — not undoubtedly until it was too late. She leaned nearer and shook Kirstie's arm.

‘We must do something! There ought to be some way!’

In stories the villain usually had a soft spot hidden somewhere under his ferocious exterior. This villain, she admitted, looked pretty tough, but you never could tell. If they could convince him that they, too, had suffered by Mr. Manning's intrigues, he might feel differently toward them. Misery nearly always loved company.

‘Tell him,’ she whispered to Kirstie — ‘tell him that we are not a bit like the Khawadjeh who found the golden box! Tell him also we have no use for one who gets what he wants and then betrays the one who told him. I can't explain now, but you tell him that!’

The man drew his brows together while Kirstie in a faint voice translated Daphne's message. From under them he shot a quick glance at her. He did not answer at once and

Daphne held her breath. At last he said something and Kirstie turned inquiringly,

‘Did Mr. Manning say he *found* a golden box?’

‘Why, yes! He found it, down there under the temple area!’

The Bedouin lifted himself a little angrily in spite of the pain.

‘If he says that,’ he cried, ‘he lies, for the golden box was not there! I — only I — know where it is!’

They all jumped. Daphne leaned forward. In her surprise she almost forgot to be afraid of him. And she forgot he could not understand her as she cried passionately:

‘Then where is it? Oh, *please* tell me! I’ll make the Shereef Al’an get you released! Honest I will.’

The other shrugged when he understood.

‘The Shereef,’ he retorted, ‘cannot release me who am not imprisoned!’

No, he had no intention of letting them go, he went on, but for diversion they might talk a little. It would do no harm. They had said that they, too, hated the curly-haired Khawadjeh. He paused, giving them a suspicious glance.

‘But how do you know that the Khawadjeh and I spoke together?’

‘We learned it through Ibrahim Wahabby,’ Kirstie answered, cautiously steering a course between truth and expediency.

‘*Ibrahim Wahabby!*’

At once the man became livid with fury, ‘Ibrahim Wahabby!’ He burst out into a volley of oaths.

‘Thou too! Thou cursed son of a dog! I might have known, for thy father was a Turk and thy mother ——!’ At last, run out of epithets and breath, he paused to glare fiercely at his three anxious captives.

‘Listen to me,’ he growled. ‘When my comrade returns, he will counsel me to kill you at once, for the weight of my wound will delay us enough without carrying you along. But I may be able to persuade him otherwise, and we shall bind you and go our way and — *ye will not remember in which direction we ride — do you understand?* For this reason only I will let you go: that I may die assured that those two dogs who have betrayed me shall not enjoy the fruit of their evil!’

He dropped his voice.

‘If the Khawadjeh has said he found the box beneath the mosque, it is a lie; and the box itself, I doubt not, was made by that rascal Ibrahim! For the real golden box has never

lain there since the day the Khawadjeh Parrish took it from behind the stone in the wall.'

Then followed an Arabian Nights' tale so astounding that Daphne could scarcely believe she heard it. She listened with an attention so undivided that it seemed at times as if story and translation made one smoothly flowing whole. Oh, lucky, lucky, that the Lairds could understand Arabic so well . . . !

For once — it seemed years ago — this same outlaw had been a servant of Don Parrish's.

'And the Khawadjeh Parrish was good to serve, but that other Khawadjeh' — he spat venomously — 'once he kicked me — *me*, who was not his servant! — when I did not obey him quickly enough. From that minute I hated him. But the Khawadjeh Parrish was another sort, and often have I cursed the demon which rose in me the day I helped to take the golden casket from its hiding-place. For as the Khawadjeh Parrish held out his hand to get it from me, blood rose to my eyes and I drew my knife against him, forgetting his trust in my desire for gold. But he caught my arm and broke the knife — my strong Saracen knife I had got me in the bazaars of Damascus — as if it had been a straw, and flung it scornfully into the hole where the box had been.

He was a brave man, my master — yet there was something even he dared not face!

‘For I, thirsting for revenge, ran swiftly, and cried to those who worshiped in the mosque above that a Christian dog profaned our shrine. As one man, they followed me, mad to kill!

‘By a secret passage he escaped at first, but we found him presently beyond the gates, running fast by back ways. At once the city roared upon his heels, for the news had spread like fire before an east wind. He turned and doubled like a hare in the chase, and all the time the box was hid beneath his arm. At last, beyond the Damascus Gate, he hid within the caves that open there below the wall, and then the soldiers came and scattered us . . .

‘That night he crept home, empty-handed. I, who had got me another knife, waited by his house for him, knowing he would surely come. If he had had the box I should have killed him. But as it was, I let him pass unharmed, seeing he had been kind to me. Instead I went to search those caverns for the golden box; and before I reached them the soldiers found me, but I stabbed one of them and so escaped. Because of that was I an outlaw among men! Because of that I never went back for the

golden box again. There was a price upon my head in Jerusalem.

'After a little, I did not care — I had enough for my desires. I have neither feared nor favored neither Turk, nor Briton, nor Arab. No, nor the Shereef Al'an! Had I been in command, his name would have availed you nothing on the Jericho Road! Did you think I did not remember you? I forget nothing!'

He stopped, pressing his hand to his side, and went on:

'The Khawadjeh who kicked me, I did not forget either! And when at last he came fawning to say he had heard beyond Jordan that I was still alive, I thanked Heaven who had brought him to me. Yet, by the Prophet, was I not merciful? I did him no harm. All I asked was thirty pounds — and I should have had a hundred! — and told him in return where the box had lain. Should I add it was no longer there? The most honest man would have done no otherwise than I. And does he not find the place even as I said? Yet he follows me still, with many promises if I will but tell him all the truth, while all the time he plots to hand me to the law! And now I see that, even from the very first, he and that dog Ibrahim betrayed me. Because of *them* was I harried from

place to place. Oh, fool, that my love for vengeance should have made me blind!’

He paused. How still the world was, hot and still, waiting — waiting — ominously. Presently he went on again painfully:

‘So there are others, too, who seek that cursed golden box? For all I care, they may have it — for spite of that Khawadjeh I hate. Besides, it is nothing to me now.’

He raised his voice.

‘The golden box my master found that day lies in one of those caverns beyond the Damascus Gate from which King Sol . . .’

He stopped, head raised. A voice was calling in the distance! It came again, louder this time, nearer!

Ali Baba had come back and was calling them by name!

A snarl brought them, frightened, to their feet. The outlaw had raised himself on one arm. His eyes blazed with fury. What threats he spat at them Daphne could not understand. She only knew, sickeningly, that their last chance of escape was gone. For they, too, he thought, had betrayed him. Ali Baba’s voice had been their knell, not their salvation.

Daphne heard the cruel hiss of breath indrawn through clenched teeth. She saw the

rifle raised, saw its cold steel muzzle pointed at her heart. The room flashed and went dark before her eyes. . . .

And then — there was a sudden ominous rumble. The ground rocked beneath her feet, and through a mist she saw the ceiling begin to sag earthward, bearing with it a ghastly, staring face. She saw the gun waver and fall . . .

And then Kirstie dragged her toward the door as behind them the ceiling crashed in, burying everything beneath its weight.

‘Let’s get out of here! Quick!’ she cried hysterically to Kirstie, who stood rigid beside her, her other arm tight around Beulah. She tried to run, but the ground seemed to be rising to meet her, and there was an intolerable giddiness in her head. Kirstie held on to her.

‘Stand still!’ she choked, her mouth full of dust; ‘it’s an earthquake — we must stay here — in — doorway!’

They huddled close within their narrow refuge. Inside upon that heap of rubbish that had once been a tower room, there was another thunderous crash. The door twisted with the shock, but it stood firm. Outside the world had gone suddenly topsy-turvy. A near-by wall was waving as if it were paper, waving

in the wind. Even as Daphne watched, it crumbled away into dust, burying as it fell a quivering rosebush. . . . Daphne closed her eyes . . .

At last — was it hours or only minutes? — the shocks subsided, the earth grew still — Ali Baba appeared disheveled beneath the ruined arch, shaking the dust from his robes.

When, a little while later, they crept away from their haunted tower house, Daphne dared to glance back. The snap-dragons still nodded, undisturbed and tranquil, in their sunny corner!

CHAPTER XV

FRAU WEISZ TELLS WHAT SHE KNOWS

DAPHNE was awakened by the sound of voices in the living-room. She sat up, half drunk with slumber, struggling to remember where she was. Her father's voice cut clearly through her drugged senses.

‘What do I think? That it’s an excellent forgery, that’s all.’

Then she remembered. They were back in Jerusalem! Back at the House of Bread. She remembered the dirty train trip to Haifa — was it only yesterday? — and the long cool night ride over the hills of Samaria when they found that every berth on the Jerusalem train had been taken by a large party of tourists. She remembered Frau Weisz’s astounded face when they had wakened her at dawn, and she had hustled round and made them coffee and toast immediately. Daphne had been so utterly weary that she had nodded as she ate, and afterwards had fallen asleep across her bed with a letter from Gerry, which Frau Weisz had fortunately neglected to forward, only

half read. And that in spite of the exciting news it contained!

Fully awake now, she slid off the bed and, tiptoeing to the door, peeped out cautiously.

Across the living-room table, her father and Mr. Manning faced each other. Between them stood the chalice, its slim silver sides glittering, and beside it lay the box, the golden box. Daphne, staring, fascinated, at the gilded sides, dingy as from long exposure, felt her spirits sink. Being face to face with it like this gave her an odd conviction that it must, somehow, be genuine. She looked quickly at her father for reassurance, and saw that his face was grim.

‘Better not say that in public, Professor,’ retorted Mr. Manning. ‘People will only laugh at you. “Sour grapes,” you know.’

The insolence! Daphne’s eyes burned, all her doubts evaporated.

‘Had you made an honest discovery, Manning,’ her father was saying, ‘I should have been the first to congratulate you. The only thing I should have asked would be that you give to Dr. Parrish the honor which death snatched from him. As it is ——’

‘Indeed!’ murmured Mr. Manning in a tone which said, ‘Try to make me!’

'As it is,' repeated the Professor, 'this Holy Grail of yours is a forgery, a clever forgery, along with the gilded box it goes in. Should you like to hear my reasons for thinking so — or shall I publish them first?'

'Oh, blackmail, eh?'

'No!' The Professor brought his fist down on the table with a thump that made the silver chalice jump. 'I'm only giving you a chance to save your face. Withdraw your claim yourself with any plausible explanation you wish, and the whole thing will be dropped right here. If not ——'

'You forget that Père Clément himself has found this genuine. Do you presume to contradict him?'

'Oh, no,' said Dr. Pollack, smiling slightly, 'not at all — I've just been down to see him and we agree perfectly — now that he has had a chance to examine your discovery more closely.'

'And you really expect me,' inquired Mr. Manning, switching the subject, 'to withdraw my claim? Do you take me for a fool, Pollack?'

'Yes,' said the Professor, 'if you choose to put it that way,' and he added impatiently, 'can't you see, man, I'm giving you an opportunity to withdraw gracefully?'

For answer, Mr. Manning thrust his hands deep into his pockets and shrugged.

‘Really,’ he declared, ‘you can’t expect me to take you seriously, you know. These vague threats of yours ——’

‘Ah!’ Dr. Pollack folded his arms. ‘Then I’ll be more definite. In the first place, that silver chalice is an exact copy of a third-century one belonging to the Greek monastery in Waddy Kelt!’

‘Absurd!’ said Mr. Manning. ‘I’ve never been inside that monastery.’

‘Maybe not,’ said the Professor, ‘but Ibrahim Wahabby’s brother is the servant there.’

A mask seemed to slip over the other man’s face. For an instant his light lashes quivered. Daphne gasped. Who had told her father that? Père Clément, probably. Mr. Manning laughed a bit too loudly,

‘I don’t see the connection, but maybe you do! Is that all?’

‘Oh, no, there are two more.’ The Professor paused to suck in his underlip. ‘No,’ he said finally, ‘the second can wait. I’ll go on to the third. The golden box was not under the temple area, because Donald Parrish removed it himself!’

The mask on Mr. Manning's face slipped a little.

'Who told you that?'

'The same man who told you — a Bedouin outlaw who had once been Parrish's boy. He confessed the truth before he died.'

'*Died?*'

'Yes, while trying to escape. The story's too long to go into just now. But he lived long enough to make a confession.'

'So he's dead, is he?' Mr. Manning apparently did not find the news disagreeable. He thrust his head forward and regarded Professor Pollack with the same curious smile which had been on his face that day by the Mosque of Omar. 'What makes you think, Professor,' he queried softly, 'that you were the only one he told the truth to finally?'

'For several reas——' The Professor stopped. 'Why do you ask that?'

'Because,' returned Mr. Manning, 'if you were thinking of searching Solomon's quarries, I wanted to save you the effort. *I* got there first, you see!' And he withdrew one hand from his pocket to wave it eloquently at the silver chalice on the table.

The Professor's jaw fell. Daphne, eaves-dropping at her crack, pressed both palms to

her mouth to stifle a bitter cry. Was this what their renewed hopes had come to? Or was it just another of Mr. Manning's clever tricks? He stood, his hands in his pockets, smiling and rocking gently on his toes as he watched the effect of his words.

'What do you mean?' Professor Pollack sounded stunned.

'Shall I tell you, Professor?' said Mr. Manning sweetly. '*Very* well. Did you really think I'd let that rascally Arab cheat me out of my thirty pounds without a word? Not if you knew me. Ibrahim told me where he'd skipped to — that fellow would sell anything for money! And I chased the dirty devil clear into Transjordanian before I finally found him.'

'You must have spent a lot of money on all this business, Manning.' Professor Pollack regarded him almost pityingly. 'Was it worth it?'

'Don't worry,' said Mr. Manning airily. 'I always look out for my own interests first. Of course the personal — er — satisfaction is worth more to me than the money I expect to make by it. Shall I continue?'

Daphne shifted cautiously to the other foot. She ached from being flattened up against the door, but she did not want to miss a syllable.

'Well, I finally wormed the truth out of him.

Oh, he knew I had the drop on him that time. And, of course, when I got what I wanted, I handed him over to the police, anyway. One can't afford to have scruples about a fellow like that. Then naturally, when I came back, I went to the quarries of Solomon and got the golden box.' He grinned. 'We didn't meet this time, did we?'

Daphne leaned her head against the wall. Her heart felt like a lump of heavy putty. Again Mr. Manning had circumvented them. And she had been so sure, so sure this time! Yet, how could he have learned all that if not from the Bedouin? There was no other way. She wanted to cry with disappointment, but she was too angry. Through the turmoil of her thoughts, she heard him finish:

'I have an appointment with a group of scholars this morning. They want to see my Holy Grail before I start for America.'

Daphne sat down on the bed until the closing of the front door announced his departure.

Then she ran across to her father's room.

'Oh — that you, ducky?' He was standing in the middle of the floor, his hand meditatively caressing his chin. He smiled at her as she closed the door behind her. 'I thought you were still asleep.'

‘With all that noise? Oh, Daddy!’ She looked at him miserably. ‘Is it true, is it really true about his finding it? Why, you could have knocked me over with a feather!’

Her father grinned ruefully. ‘Me, too,’ he admitted. ‘At first, anyway. Before he’d finished I’d recovered my wits somewhat.’

‘Then you think, maybe’ — Daphne began to brighten — ‘it wasn’t true what he said about the quarries?’

‘We-ell, I d’know, daughter. His version seemed to correspond with the one you got from the bandit, but ——’

‘The whole point is,’ her father went on energetically, ‘that whatever Manning knows about the whereabouts of the real box, he hasn’t got it! At least that thing he showed me was a fake. It was Père Clément who put me wise to its being exactly like one in the Greek monastery. He recognized it at once. I saw Manning was on his guard instantly, and I decided to save my second reason, which has to do with the inner cup, until later, when I could get more proof. I myself haven’t the slightest doubt it’s the one I saw the day we took Salim home; do you remember? There’s the same curious wavy dent in the rim. So I sprang my third reason on Manning instead to see how

he'd take it, and I must say the way he did had me floored at first.'

'Do you think, if there is another box' — Daphne was still doubtful — she had been sure so many times already! — 'that you'll really find the Holy Grail in it?'

'Oh, no.' He shook his head. 'That was just Manning's brilliant idea gleaned from Gilles de Crex's remark about an old chalice being among the plunder. If any one had thought it actually was the Holy Grail, you may be sure the record would have said so. It was still believed in firmly at the time of the Crusades, you see. Manning just wanted something that would appeal to popular imagination. Père Clément said that was one thing that made him suspicious from the first. People are always thinking they've found the Holy Grail, especially since some one dug up that old cup in Antioch. No, don't set your heart on that, my dear; personally, I'm hoping there'll be some sort of manuscript. That's what we modern Galahads look for.'

He took out his watch. 'The first thing I'm going to do is to call round at the Athertons'. Vail wrote you, didn't he, that his father had succeeded in getting Salim's sister, Munireh, into a lace-school at last? If she can positively

identify that cup, it will save a trip to Ain Karim. Shall I tell Vail to come round this afternoon?’

‘Oh, yes, do! Or else I’ll go with you now, if you’ll wait a few minutes.’

But he discouraged her. ‘You ought to rest this morning, ducky. Besides, I’ve got a thousand things to attend to. Sometime to-day, if possible, I want to take a look around the quarries of Solomon, for all of Manning and his Holy Grails!’

He laughed quite cheerfully as he picked up his hat. ‘I’ll stop for the mail while I’m out, there may be some from home ——’

‘Oh, that reminds me.’ She darted back to her own room. ‘Aunt May sent you a letter in mine,’ she announced, returning with the envelope in her hand.

‘Now, what’s she writing me about?’ He eyed it dubiously.

‘What Gerry did me, I guess,’ said Daphne. ‘The doctor says she should take a long ocean trip for her pain. So she and Gerry are going to start in August on one of those world tours, and she wants me to go along.’

She wondered at her own calmness as she told him. Not many weeks earlier such a suggestion would have left her giddy, yet now it

didn't seem to strike fire at all. Perhaps she was just too tired to be interested in anything. Of course, it would be nice to see the whole world; 'She says there won't be any expenses if I'll come.'

'Hm.' Her father had torn open the envelope and was skimming its contents. 'I don't know but what I ought to let you go,' he said slowly. 'Things are so uncertain here and you might never have such another chance.'

Two months ago she would have flung herself upon him for pure happiness, but this morning somehow a lot of the glamour seemed to be missing. She said vaguely, 'I dare say it would be lovely, being with Gerry again.' Yet, curiously, it wasn't Gerry's face she saw as she said it; but Kirstie's, as it had faded into a blur on the station platform yesterday morning. Kirstie, gentle, brave Kirstie, with her steadfast gray eyes which had glowed when she squeezed Daphne's hand and whispered, 'Oh, Daffy, what do you think Father says? Mother has to get out of the heat this summer, and maybe, maybe we'll go to Carmel, too ——!'

She wandered back to her own room restlessly, after her father had gone. She was so wide-awake she didn't believe she could take

another nap. There was a discreet tap at the door.

‘Fräulein,’ Frau Weisz outside whispered loudly, ‘are you asleep already still?’

‘No, come in if you want to.’ Daphne smiled at her as she entered. How kind Frau Weisz was when you got to know her.

Frau Weisz sat down so heavily on the one chair that it groaned. She looked more disturbed than Daphne had ever seen her.

‘This morning so hard I have thought,’ she declared, ‘that I very nearly another “kopf-weh” make; also to speak to the Herr Manning before he departs I forget. I should tell him that two times on yesterday a native to see him comes and to-day he says he will remain until he the Herr sees. What can one do? The Herr Manning is never here now that he so famous is! Dinner here; tea there. . . . And he orders one this way and that when he returns, as if one were his servant. If he did not soon to America go, I would tell him he may not here remain longer!’

Daphne made a sympathetic noise in her throat. Frau Weisz was certainly upset to have turned so garrulous. And she still sat on, too, with the air of one who has not yet told all she knows.

'Your father, Fräulein, is he also departed?'

'He'll be back for lunch. He isn't so popular.' Daphne could not help adding bitterly.

'Ah but Fräulein, he is good. I have seen that he is good, like that dear Herr Parrish who was to me as a son ——' She leaned closer, dropping her voice, 'This morning I have heard how he and the other Herr speak together, and I say to myself that at last what I know, I should tell. The Herr Parrish would wish it.'

'What is it, Frau Weisz?' Daphne was alert now.

'It is this, Fräulein. I have nursed the poor Herr Parrish when he dies. He will allow no one else to come near. And in his fever he has said many things that in health he would not have told, I think. Over and over has he said a name, "Adam! Adam!" The poor man, it has done my heart woe to hear him. And once he takes my hand and cries, "I cannot remember, I cannot remember what I have written on the wall!" He looks very wild, and to quiet him I say, "Is it Adam, then?" "Yes, that is it!" He sighs and whispers, "It was the first thing I thought of, and no one can know it is not just a name on the wall!" One time or two he thinks I am Herr Manning and

he pushes me away. "No, no, I will not tell you! I do not trust you!"

'Fräulein, I have said nothing of this. It is not my business. But I think Herr Parrish would not have me be silent, now, after the Herr Manning has spoken so this morning — for I do not believe that he has found that name at all! How is it possible when no one has known of it but me and the Herr Parrish, who is in his grave?'

'That Arab servant he had — maybe he knew about it.' Daphne did not dare to hope any more.

'Daud? No! Daud is with the Moslems that day! He cannot know where his master hides. He cannot see him write the name on the wall.'

Daphne sprang off the bed the moment Frau Weisz left, shed her kimono and scrambled into a dress. She was going after her father and then maybe they would both hurry off to the quarries of Solomon and find the name on the wall, if it was to be found. Why should Parrish mark the new hiding-place that way she wondered, jamming on her hat? You'd think 'Adam' written on any wall would attract attention, not distract it. Maybe it had — Fear whispered in her ear, maybe it had attracted

Mr. Manning's! Still, hadn't her father said positively that the box and its contents were a forgery?

'Adam,' she repeated it to herself as she grabbed a clean handkerchief and went out, calling to Frau Weisz, 'I'm going over to Athertons'.' She would catch up with her father there.

CHAPTER XVI

IN SOLOMON'S QUARRIES

BUT at the Athertons' she found only Achmed, who spoke a language he was pleased to think English. With some difficulty Daphne managed to make out that every one, including Lady Clare, was out; and that yes, the Khawadjeh, her father, had been there, left a note, and departed. Daphne asked about Munireh, but Achmed, not understanding, only giggled, and thus balked, she walked slowly away, hugging the scant shade by the wall. What to do now? Go back and possess her soul in patience until lunch-time? In her high state of tension this did not appeal to her at all! She wanted, more than anything else, to find her father. Probably, she reasoned, he hadn't been able to learn from Achmed either where Munireh was, and had gone elsewhere. But where? She paused, considering possibilities, while she groped for her handkerchief to wipe her hot face with, for the sun was terrific. She could not find it — must have dropped it at the Athertons' — Where was her father likely to go? Her face cleared. Why, to the quarries, of

course! From the Athertons' it was only a short way to the Damascus Gate, near which was the quarry entrance. That's where he would be — she'd go and look, anyway.

She reached the entrance in time to see a crowd of tourists, pushing in. She frowned, hoping they wouldn't stay long, for, of course, when she found her father, he would want to waste no time discovering the name on the wall. Inside where a harassed guide was handing out long, slow-burning tapers, the caretaker, usual at such places, was not in evidence.

'Here, lady!' Automatically the guide thrust a candle into Daphne's hands, and after one look down the shadowy slope of the quarry, she was glad she had it.

'Stay close, please, la-dies, and I will show you everything,' shouted the guide, darting ahead. They pushed after him, like a flock of sheep, and Daphne, holding her lighted taper, trailed along in the rear, looking for her father. She saw nothing but limestone walls, glimmering whitely when the candles pushed back the dark. There was something spooky about the way they seemed to float out of the shadows. The air, though dry, was oppressive. Daphne found it hard to breathe sometimes. Perhaps that was why, when she tried to evoke the gen-

tle ghosts that haunted the vaults below the temple area, there came instead more sinister spirits, to make her heart trip scarily. Or, perhaps it was because the place was so unfamiliar. This was her first visit. Her father had always been going to take her, only there had been so many more interesting things to see first. She supposed that even when she left Palestine there would still be some she hadn't visited. Especially since she was going in September — or was she going?

'King Solomon, la-dies, make the stone for his Temple from here. Many fam-ous vis-i-tors have wrote their names, ladies.' The guide waved his taper at the vast white ceiling. The tourists tipped their heads back, like chickens drinking water. Daphne, a trifle supercilious, tipped too. Across the ghostly dome a name sprawled in big black letters.

'Walter Smith, St. Louis, 1908.'

As the guide moved on, holding his light high, other names popped out on the ceiling, on the walls . . .

'Oh!' said Daphne to herself, enlightened at last. No one paid any attention to her, for the guide was herding them on. Names on the wall? That was why Don Parrish had been sure no one would notice his sign! One name

more or less in such a place would attract nobody. Momentarily forgetting her father, she paused to read all she could see. There were English names and French names, Spanish, Italian, and a few even in Hebrew which Daphne would have liked to try her hand at deciphering if she hadn't been otherwise occupied. Of Adams, however, there were none except a J. Thaddeus Adams from Kalamazoo, Michigan, and Daphne doubted if he could be counted.

She walked on, so intent on her search that she bumped into a fat lady on the edge of the crowd.

'See that big hole, la-dies?' the guide was droning. 'Now listen, la-dies, while I t'row a little stone!'

They listened, and Daphne heard the sharp rat-tat grow fainter and fainter ——

'Go straight t'rough to China, la-dies,' declared the guide. 'That hole, it has no bot-tom all right!'

At last, at the end of the cavern, he headed them back. Daphne followed with a puzzled frown. There had been no sign of her father anywhere. Maybe he hadn't come after all. Or were there other caves, she wondered? — and was about to move up and ask the guide

when she perceived far off, among the shadows to her left, a blacker one upon the limestone wall. She must have passed it when she had been busy deciphering names. Holding her taper at arm's length, she walked over to investigate and found it, as she suspected, no shadow, but a passage leading off into further gloom. She looked after the retreating tourists, and then, drawing a determined breath, started swiftly down the corridor. It was narrow and curved almost imperceptibly. But there were no corners to turn and she knew she couldn't get lost when all she had to do was to go back. She peered carefully about her, letting her frail light sweep over the uneven walls and illumine every niche, which time or tools had chiselled in the soft limestone. 'Father,' she called cautiously, but there was no reply. The voices of the tourists had already died away behind her.

'Father!' She called louder this time. And a hundred echoes woke up and repeated it. She went on, slightly bewildered, not sure whether any one had replied or not. For no apparent reason her heart began to pump loudly. She looked over her shoulder. The dark was at her very heels. Her hand shook and the wavering flame sent weird shadow-

shapes leaping across the walls. In alarm she steadied her candle. Already it was more than half consumed. She ought to start back. But surely she must be near the end of the corridor — Suddenly she paused, her attention caught by a series of odd scratches on the soft limestone. The shadow cast by her candle-light threw them into vivid relief.

□ 7 8

Their regularity made them look like letters. Why, they were — Hebrew letters! Strange that they should be away off here where apparently tourists never came. Some Jew, as rash as she, must have carved his name to prove he had ventured to this point. She had easily recognized the first letter — ‘A’ — *Aleph*, and the next — was a ‘D’ — Pleased at her success, Daphne frowned at the remaining character, her uneasiness momentarily pushed aside. Of course, it was an ‘M,’ and the whole wasn’t a proper name after all — but the word for ‘man,’ spelled with the proper Hebrew disregard for vowels. She had picked it out once in that first chapter of Genesis with her father’s aid. He had told her that Adam and Eve weren’t proper names at all, but simply the words ‘man’ and ‘woman’ taken

over bodily into English, 'Adam' — man — 'Eve' —

Adam! She very nearly dropped her candle. Adam — the name on the wall! The name Parrish had repeated over and over in his fever, fearful lest he forget. The name he had scratched on — She had found it at last! And the golden box, the long-lost golden casket, ought to be somewhere near unless — She flashed the candle-flame along the wall, high, low. Unbroken limestone rose above her. She looked around her baffled. Perhaps she hadn't gone far enough. She started forward impetuously, her gaze only for the wall . . .

There was a sickening sensation in her stomach and she felt herself falling. Without warning, she had walked off into space. Then abruptly her feet hit solid rock again with a jar that hurt her teeth. She flung out one hand to keep her balance. With the other she still hung instinctively to her taper. For an awful minute she thought it had gone out. Then it steadied and she saw that she had landed on a ledge of rock, made by the hewing of a monstrous block of stone thousands of years before. Just above her head was the broken edge in which the treacherous passage had terminated. She could

almost reach it with her finger-tips, but the limestone was too smooth and crumbling to offer a hold. When she tried, a piece broke off and went bounding past her, down, down into the blackness beyond. The noise of it grew fainter — fainter . . .

(‘See that big hole, la-dies? Now listen while I t’row a lit-tle stone!’)

The memory was so vivid she could almost have believed the guide was there beside her. Horror-stricken, she shrank back away from that bottomless edge.

‘Oh, Father!’ she sobbed, and then wildly, ‘*Father!*’

The mocking echoes answered her.

Again the candle wobbled and her heart stood still. Slowly, slowly the flame straightened. She drew a deep breath. It was as if through the darkness her father’s voice had spoken.

‘Be quiet, Daphne, be still, ducky. It’s the only way.’ It was the only way! If she was to get out of this, she would have to keep her head and her hands steady, for she was quite alone, she realized, in an unfrequented corner of the quarries. And no one knew she had come. Even the tourists had stared at her vaguely when they noticed her at all, too used

to additions and subtractions in their party to give them much attention.

Presently, controlling the shaking of her knees, she began to examine her prison. She found that at one end it tapered off into the solid rock. She crept in the opposite direction, hoping for a broken corner or jutting ledge to climb up by, but at the other the stone had been cut out squarely, save at one spot where a chunk of limestone had been broken off or worn away, making a small cavity full of shadow. A faint gleam in its blackness caught Daphne's eye. She stooped, vaguely puzzled. Her hand met something cold and firm. She drew it out. It was a box, a golden box, engraved in curious old Byzantine patterns! She blinked at it an instant almost stupidly, so numbed was she by the horror of her predicament, then, slowly, she began to comprehend.

The box! The real box! After all their disappointments, it was theirs at last. With trembling hands she worked at the corroded clasp. It crumbled between her fingers and she lifted the lid. Within she saw only a cross of rough-cut amethyst, half fallen from a yellowed scroll in which once it had evidently been concealed. If there were other jewels besides, she did not see them. Her eyes were fixed on that

cracked and yellowed parchment on which she could still see the faint trace of closely written letters. How glad her father would be!

Then the warm flood of joy ebbed and left her shivering. Dully she dropped the lid. What good to find the box now, when she was caught like this down here?

How long she huddled there against the smooth wall, the golden box beside her, she never knew. It seemed hours on hours; — days — years. The taper burned low and lower and the dark that was full of nameless terrors — *What was that?* Over there in the darkness? It was like a face, a Bedouin's face — leering — leering——! Her overwrought nerves snapped like taut rubber. She struggled to her feet. She beat the cruel wall with her free hand. She tried to scream, louder, louder, but her voice would not come. She was in a nightmare, a nightmare from which she would never wake up. At last, exhausted, she sank once more into a heap. The spent taper slipped from her cramped fingers and burned sputtering to its end. In only a minute now it would be gone and the waiting Faces would close in unhindered. A little minute; — the last fitful gleam was mirrored in the golden box beside her.

A deep roar reverberated through the silence.

Daphne listened, eyes dilating. Was it real — that sound — or only another torture her fancy had invented? It came again. Nearer this time! She heard the sound of feet, running, running. She sprang up, screaming frantically — words, prayers, she did not know what. Behind, the candle went out unnoticed, for other lights were in the dark above her now, and a boy's voice, crying:

‘She’s here somewhere! I just heard her! Daphne, oh, I say, Daphne!’

And again came that joyous roar as Lady Clare’s great head appeared against the swaying glare of a lantern.

‘Look out!’ Daphne sobbed wildly in her relief. ‘Look out, or you’ll go over too! Oh, Lady! Lady! How did you find me!’ She heard Lady’s whine; felt her warm snuffling breath upon her hair; heard her scratching at the smooth stone. And then all at once there were many faces, dear human faces, peering down at her, while human hands, pushing Lady aside, reached for her impetuously — her father’s hands, Colonel Atherton’s. . .

‘My word, how did you ever get down there?’ Without warning Vail dropped beside her on the ledge. ‘Catch her wrists, Professor, I’ll hold her up!’

'Wait, Vail, just a minute!' The box! The golden box! That must go first!

'Here, Father, here it is! I found it!' And then Vail was boosting her up — up. She slipped, scrambled, and was safe in her father's arms, crying against his coat. She felt a cool muzzle thrust up against her cheek.

'Oh, Lady Clare! Lady, darling.' She hugged the great head close to her. There was no more wonderful dog in all the world. Hereafter, because of Lady Clare, she would always prefer big dogs to little ones!

'It was Lady who found you!' cried Vail, as his father helped him back. 'The caretaker swore you weren't here. But I suspect he'd been off somewhere for refreshments. He's no good Moslem, to judge from his breath!'

Dr. Pollack had one arm tightly around his daughter, and the other about the box. He said nothing, but the nothing was very eloquent.

'We'd only just come in and had your note' — Vail was voluble with excitement — 'when your father came looking for you. Achmed swore you'd gone off toward the Damascus Gate, because he'd called after you that you'd dropped your handkerchief, but you didn't hear. I was sure Lady Clare could trail you by

that, but no one really believed it, did they, old girl!' Lady Clare inclined her tail gently in agreement.

'You see' — the Professor held his daughter close as they came out again into blinding day — 'I went for the mail from Atherton's and then home, where Frau Weisz told me everything, and it occurred to me, when you weren't at the Athertons', you might go to the quarries and look for yourself. Of course, it was a foolish thing to do alone, dear ——'

'I thought you would be there, Daddy,' said Daphne meekly. 'But there were only a lot of tourists, and ——'

'She jolly well knocked us off our feet when we picked up the scent!' Vail could talk of nothing but his dog. 'That Arab was not a little bit of help, except to hold the lantern!'

'Is Mr. Manning back yet?' asked Daphne breathlessly when at last they reached the House of Bread (oh, how dear and comforting it seemed!)

'Wasn't when I left,' said her father. 'I'd like a chance to compare this box with his before he sees it, only he took his with him. Carries it around in his suitcase, you know' — to Colonel Atherton — 'so nobody can steal it, I suppose.'

As they reached the veranda, Daphne gave a cry of astonishment. For Munireh was sitting at one end of it in a hand-me-down pink dress, starched to the texture of paper. Judging from its style, the child it had originally been made for had had time to grow up and have children of her own by now. But Munireh obviously thought it perfect. She swished it grandly as she ran to plant a happy kiss on Daphne's hand.

Vail chortled. 'Yes, we sent Achmed to fetch her for you. She's a changed woman, isn't she? Even had her teeth brushed!'

And her hair sleeked back until it pulled her eyebrows up with it, giving a continually surprised expression to her impish face.

'I think Mr. Manning,' said Dr. Pollack suddenly, 'is going to have several surprises when he comes in. Look who's at the other end of the porch, will you?' They whirled to look.

Ibrahim Wahabby was squatted there with the air of being a permanent fixture. But on being interrogated he only salaamed, and said his business was with the Khawadjeh Manning alone.

'There'll be a merry time when Manning does come,' laughed the Colonel, and added,

'We'll leave you here for the present, if you don't mind.'

Tears sprang weakly to Daphne's eyes as she turned to them. 'I — I — thank you for finding me!' she faltered, and bent to hide her tears behind Lady Clare's right ear.

'Don't be silly,' said Vail in a gruff voice. 'Go get something to eat, and you'll feel better!'

'We'll stop around later,' added Colonel Atherton politely, staring at his rude son in some surprise.

But before she followed Vail's advice, Daphne went to her father's room and gazed in rapturous wonder at that battered, corroded object which they had both almost despaired of ever finding.

'Isn't it wonderful?' she whispered, quite awed. 'Oh, it was worth everything, Daddy, even being lost in the dark, to have been able to save it. I wonder what Mr. Manning will say when he sees it!'

CHAPTER XVII

'NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM

BUT what Mr. Manning would have said when he saw it, no one was ever destined to know, for he departed that night for Egypt, box, chalice, and all, leaving no word of farewell behind him.

'Do you suppose he had a hunch that other people suspected his box was a forgery, before he went to the meeting that morning — or did he know Ibrahim Wahabby was after him?'

Daphne and her father were talking it all over again as they stood in the Kantara station one tropic-warm evening several months later.

'Both, maybe.' Her father routed an inquisitive fly with the palm-leaf whisk he had purchased that morning in Port Saïd. 'Lucky for us,' he chuckled, 'that Achmed's wife's mother's cousin was the cabby who drove him to the station that night or we'd still have Ibrahim parked on our doorstep. For sticking qualities he beats even an Egyptian fly!' — and he swatted another one vigorously.

'Well, he certainly thought our porch was a

fly-paper,' giggled Daphne. 'I wonder how much longer he'd have been able to keep quiet, though.'

For Ibrahim Wahabby had preserved his own counsel until the Athertons, calling in the course of the following morning to inquire after Daphne's health, brought with them word that Mr. Manning had folded his tents like the Arabs he loved, and as silently stolen away.

'Then, for Heaven's sake, tell Ibrahim so,' said Dr. Pollack when they had verified the rumor by a hurried glance at Mr. Manning's former bedroom, now absolutely empty of his possessions. So that was why he had carried his suitcase with him that morning before! It had been his plan then to leave the country that night.

The effect of this news on Ibrahim was instantaneous. He sprang to his feet and Daphne thought he was going to howl, but, instead, he beat his breast and rolled anguished eyes at Heaven, while he called on God and His Prophet to witness how he had been wronged! Had he not worked his fingers to the very bone for that Khawadjeh, and what had he received in return? Nothing but a few paltry piastres and a great many promises!

And then and there Ibrahim poured out a

tale which supplied the missing links in the long chain of Mr. Manning's scheming.

For Ibrahim, it appeared, in spite of his avowal of innocence, was not only a maker of spurious antiques, but secret agent, also, for all the underhand activities, the plots and intrigues which seethed unceasingly beneath Palestinian affairs, sending up only a bubble once in a while to disturb the quiet surface. The adventure on the Jericho Road had been such a bubble. So it was not strange that Mr. Manning, learning from the Bedouins of Moab that one of the outlaw band had been a servant of a Khawadjeh Parrish, should go to Ibrahim Wahabby, whom he knew from other days, for particulars — after Père Clément had balked his efforts to see the manuscript itself. Ibrahim, for a consideration, had arranged the meetings with the fugitive outlaw.

‘But, when he returns from Jerusalem,’ cried Ibrahim, ‘having found nothing, he is very angry. “That dog of a thief has deceived me!” he says. “But I shall yet gain the end I hoped for, though perhaps by a different road. But I will have the truth from that Bedouin first.”’

“‘Alas,” I answer him. “He has fled!”

“‘Then I will follow him!”

“But, lord, he is already far beyond Jordan ——”

“Where he goes so can I,” says the Khawadjeh, and seeing that he is determined in his heart, I answer him only, “Yes, Lord.”

‘For who am I to question what my masters do? and, besides, that Bedouin had given me for my own pains in this matter but three of those thirty pounds he received from the Khawadjeh.

‘So the Khawadjeh rides where I tell him and in due time returns.

“‘It is as I thought,’ he says. “He lied because the golden box was no more. Having come upon it in the quarries of Solomon, the fool was in so great haste to take it away that he tripped and the box fell from his hand into a bottomless abyss! So that is that — and now hearken, Ibrahim, to the plan which I have for my head ——””

Ibrahim spread out his hands with an injured gesture.

‘Judge, Shereef, if I have not acted honestly in this affair! He bids me make him a gilded box that shall look as if it had been buried for centuries and within it a silver chalice that one would swear had been graved before the Prophet appeared in Mecca.

“I can make you even such a thing,” I assure him, remembering my brother who is servant in that monastery where are many such ancient vessels.

“And inside the silver cup must be a plainer one” — he tells me further — “If you do this well and in haste I will double your price,” he promises.

‘Shereef, I am a poor man and lately have I taken a second wife — what can I do but agree? And Allah favors me beyond my hopes, for I remember that in the house of a miserable *fellah* who has once worked for me is the second cup as I have need of, plain and also most ancient of itself, so that I need waste no time in making it appear so. Good money have I paid to get it too! — they had me at their mercy, those *fellaheen*! And day and night do I labor using all my skill and, when at last all is done, I perceive that never before have I fashioned two such perfect things as this box and this silver chalice.

‘The Khawadjeh also agrees that it is well and pays me something of what he owes me. promising that on the morrow will come the rest from America. I wait. The morrow comes and goes, but he does not. The days pass and at length I say to myself, “The Khawadjeh is

busy against his return to America. I myself will go after the money." Besides, I weary of the complaints of my new wife to whom I had promised much jewelry on the strength of it.

'And now, what shall I tell her? What of the money, of the time which I have spent? What do I have? Nothing! I am despoiled! I am ruined!'

Tears flowed into his beard, and with a disconsolate gesture he wrapped his scanty coat about him as if it were an *aba*, and departed sniffing and sighing.

'Old rascal,' said Vail looking after him. 'He's lost more "face" than anything else. They say at Ain Karim he's worth thousands, so don't look too sorry for him, Daphne.'

'One of Manning's biggest mistakes,' put in the Professor thoughtfully, 'was in not seeing that Ibrahim didn't copy that monastery cup too closely. He ought to have known that Orientals are slavish imitators. Of course, Père Clément's excellent memory spotted the likeness at once.'

Now, months later, the whole scene passed in vivid review through Daphne's mind and an abstracted silence fell between them, as she stood beside her father on Kantara platform.

'I wonder' — it was her father who broke it presently — 'if Manning is still going to publish his book about Bedouin? He's got a lot of first-hand material about their lying abilities all right! I'd like to have seen his face when he discovered that wily Bedouin had no more told him the truth the second time than he had the first. And then, when Manning betrayed him, he was ready to do anything, even tell the truth, to revenge himself. The trouble with people like Manning is, they are so vain, they can't believe any one can be as shrewd as they. Eventually it proves their downfall,' he chuckled.

'I'll wager he hates to pick up a paper nowadays for fear he'll see something more about that rare manuscript which has recently been recovered from Solomon's quarries, and has proved to be the earliest record of the life of Christ ever found, and the most startling discovery in years. I only wish Don Parrish were alive to know!' He sighed a little regretfully.

'Oh, Daddy' — Daphne leaned close against him — 'I'm so proud! All the nice things people say about you, and then the University telling you to go ahead with those new excavations you want to do ——'

'Even though it means I'll be here another

year and maybe more?’ Her father tried to peep down into her face. ‘Are you sure you don’t wish you were sailing with your Aunt May to-day, Daphne?’

‘Pos’tive!’ Daphne looked up into the scented dark from which the stars hung like shining drops. ‘Why, I couldn’t possibly go away now with all the good times we’re having on Mount Carmel. And Kirstie and Beulah coming to Jerusalem in November! I don’t believe I’ll mind studying this winter when I have some one to do it with me. And Vail says his cousin Alice may come out for Christmas; — and maybe when you start digging down there at Kirjeth Safer, you’ll let me come down and watch sometimes. I might translate the Hebrew inscriptions for you, if you found any.’

‘Fine, ducky!’ he promised, laughing. ‘I’ll remind you of that later. Well, I’m glad you didn’t change your mind about staying with me, I can tell you — the block would be feeling mighty lonely to-night if the chip had gone off and left it, but I was just afraid that maybe, when you saw your Aunt and Gerry, you would be sorry you’d turned down their invitation.’

‘Do you know’ — Daphne bent to look at a basketful of golden fruit which an Egyptian

woman had placed tactfully at their feet — ‘I — I think Gerry must have changed since last January. She didn’t seem a bit like I thought she’d be somehow — maybe it’s because she sticks so many more French words into her sentences; or maybe it’s because I haven’t been with her for a while, I don’t know. Don’t those Yusef Effendis look good? I’m so thirsty, I think I’ll get some.’

They ate their tangerines and then gathered their little luggage together — they had made a flying trip from Carmel — and followed it down the steep bank of the canal where a ferry waited to take them across.

‘Remember how I almost got left the last time?’ Daphne smiled at the memory. ‘And how that old pontoon bridge wobbled when you walked on it? It was exciting, though. I’m sort of sorry it’s gone.’

The water was black satin on which their boat made shiny wrinkles as it slid across.

‘There’s a ship coming.’

Far up the canal a little round light was floating toward them.

‘Shouldn’t wonder if it’s the one your Aunt May’s on; it ought to be coming through about this time. Shall we wait and see?’

They stood on the far bank, arm tucked in

arm. The lights of the train made a golden chain across the dark behind them. The boat came steadily nearer. Its great searching fan of light enfolded them in brilliance and went on. The steamer passed, a monstrous shadow in the night, mysterious, alluring, its portholes rows of little golden moons. A few passengers leaned against the railing, but, if Aunt May or Geraldine were among them, the night blurred their faces into those of strangers.

‘Good-bye!’ called Daphne softly. ‘*Bon voyage*, Gerry!’ — and she blew a kiss to the lighted decks.

Then they turned and walked slowly and in silence toward the chain of lights.

‘A penny for your thoughts, dear,’ said her father, when they reached the golden bead which marked her compartment window.

‘Oh!’ — she came back suddenly — ‘I was thinking of something Anna Carlson told me that night we went to see the Passover; that back in Europe the Jews are so longing to come back to their Promised Land that, instead of saying good-bye when they leave each other, they say: “Next year in Jerusalem.” I was thinking, Daddy, that I might have said that too instead of “Good-bye,” just now . . . “Next Year in Jerusalem!”’

'Next year in the funny old House of Bread! Oh, I've got the most wonderful ideas for fixing it up and planting a garden in front and I don't know what all. I'm sure Frau Weisz will let me.'



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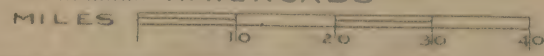
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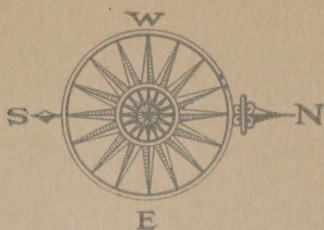
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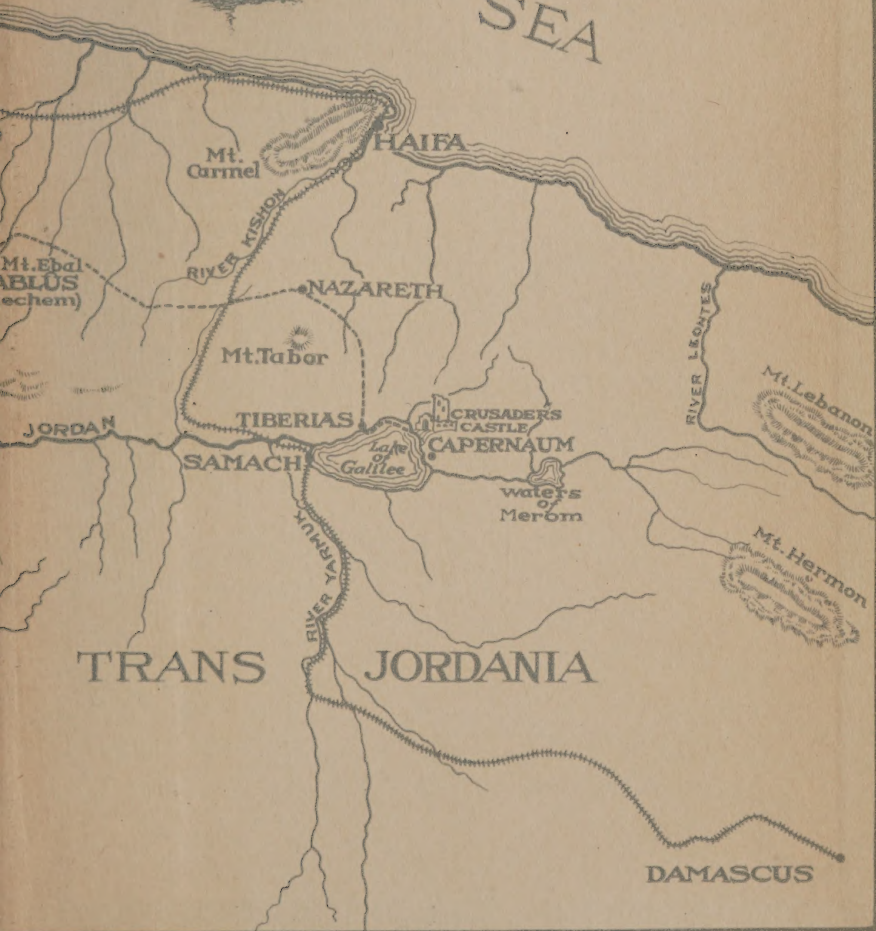
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